

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Jesus Heals Man at Pool of Bethesda

### John 5:1-18

#### Opening

Gathering: Share times when God has intervened in situations even when no one had asked for His help.

Today's Focus: Jesus reached out His loving hand of mercy to heal a man without hope.

Key Verses: *Jess asked him, "Do you want to get well?"* John 5:6

*He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.* John 5:18

Opening Prayer

#### Lesson

Jesus' Passovers (*John 5:1*)

How does Matthew summarize the time of Jesus' ministry that we have studied the past few weeks?  
Matthew 4:23-25 = He went thru Galilee teaching, preaching, healing; News spread; Crowds

Where did Jesus go after months of ministry in Galilee?

John 5:1 = To Jerusalem to celebrate a feast

What feast was this likely to have been?

Deuteronomy 16:16 = Passover, Pentecost or Booths

What is the first feast that Jesus attended after the start of His ministry?

John 2:13 = Passover - Celebrating God's salvation of the Jews by the blood of a lamb

What is the last feast Jesus attended at the end of His ministry?

John 12:1, 12 = Passover - He becomes the Pascal lamb that saves from death

Do we know of any other Passovers during Jesus' ministry?

John 6:4 = Feeding of the 5000 was right before Passover

Note: These three Passovers lead us to conclude that Jesus' ministry lasted over 2 years

If today's feast was another Passover, then Jesus' ministry could have been over 3 yrs

There could also have been other Passovers that aren't mentioned (John 21:25)

The Healing Pool of Bethesda (*John 5:2-4*)

Where was the pool of Bethesda? = *There is ... not there was* - Written before J destroyed in 70 AD?

John 5:2 = In Jerusalem, north of the Sheep gate

Where was the Sheep Gate? = Where sheep were led in for sacrifices at the temple

Nehemiah 12:38-39 (3:1) = NE corner of city wall, Due north of the temple

*Bethesda* - Meant *House of mercy* or *House of grace*

Two spring-fed pools surrounded by 4 porches and separated by a fifth

Excavated in 1888, 55' x 12', steep and winding steps to reach the pool

What kind of people hung out at Bethesda?

John 5:3 = The disabled - blind, lame, paralyzed

Why? = Faded fresco found on excavated wall shows angel troubling the water

John 5:4 = Waited for angel to stir waters. First one in was healed.

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### Jesus Reaches Out (*John 5:5*)

Who did Jesus choose out of all the disabled He saw at Bethesda? = Many others left unhealed

John 5:5 = An invalid of 38 years, hopeless without God's grace

What analogy can be made about this man's 38 years of hopelessness?

Deuteronomy 2:13-14 = Israel wandered aimlessly 38 yrs before God led into Promised Land

Who claimed they were chosen by God despite their hopeless condition?

1 Timothy 1:12-14 = Paul appointed by grace although a blasphemer, persecutor and violent

Why did Paul believe he was picked out?

1 Timothy 1:15-16 = To show Jesus' unlimited patience and mercy to His chosen

Who else has been chosen by God despite their hopeless condition?

Romans 5:6-8 = Us! *When we were still powerless ... sinners, Christ died for us*

### The Call of the Sheep Gate (*John 5:6*)

What did Jesus ask the man?

John 5:6 = *Do you want to get well?*

Was this a stupid question?

Acts 3:2-5 (16:16-19) = No, some disabled made a decent income begging

Was there more behind Jesus' question than just if he wanted to get better? = Jesus is the Sheep Gate

John 10:2-10 = Jesus calls His sheep, if they listen and enter they will have full life

Why is it important for us to answer Jesus' call to follow Him and receive His healing grace?

John 12:47-50 = The Father will judge those who reject the Son's call

### Fruitless Efforts (*John 5:7*)

Did the man answer Jesus with a Yes or a No?

John 5:7 = Neither, he gave an excuse why he had been unable to heal himself

How are we like the man in our ability to justify and save ourselves?

Galatians 2:15-16 = We're not justified by works of the law, but by faith in Jesus

Do our righteous efforts have any merit or are they useless like the man's efforts to get in?

Isaiah 64:6 = *We earn nothing by them - All our righteous acts are like filthy rags*

How did Paul react when he heard that the Galatians were trying to be justified by the law?

Galatians 3:1-5 = He reprimanded them to live by faith instead of by the law

What works must we do to obey God and be considered righteous?

John 6:28-29 = *The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent*

### The Grace of Jesus (*John 5:8-9*)

How did this man differ from others who Jesus healed?

Mark 10:46-51 = Bartimaeus pleaded for Jesus' mercy and healing, gave a direct answer

Since the man at Bethesda didn't ask Jesus to heal him, did Jesus pass him by?

John 5:8 = No, He gave His healing anyway

What explains Jesus' actions?

Luke 19:10 = *The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*

Did the man wait for Jesus to carry him to the troubled water for healing?

John 5:9a = No, he picked up his mat and walked

What risk was there to the man by obeying Jesus?

Mark 2:9-12 = He might fall down in full view of others and be embarrassed

How do we respond when Jesus asks us to pick up our mat, even when others may laugh?

Luke 9:23-26 = Take up our cross daily without being ashamed of Jesus

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### Knowing Jesus (*John 5:12-14*)

How was this man's response similar to that of Bartimaeus?

Mark 10:52 = His faith made him well

Was his saving faith in Jesus as the Messiah?

John 5:12-13 = No, he didn't even know who Jesus was

Don't we need to acknowledge and know Jesus before we can receive His blessings?

Romans 9:15-16 = No, God gives mercy to whoever He wants, regardless of merit

What parable did Jesus tell that makes this point? = *Are you envious because I am generous?*

Matthew 20:9-15 (1-16) = Workers in the Vineyard

How did Jesus later reveal Himself and His purpose to the man?

John 5:14 = Later *Jesus found him*, told him to stop sinning

What did Jesus mean by *something worse may happen to you*?

Romans 8:5-6, 13 = Living by the sinful nature leads to death, by Spirit leads to life

### Jesus Works on the Sabbath (*John 5:9-10*)

How did the Jewish leaders respond to this great miracle of healing a 38-year invalid?

John 5:9-10 = They complained that the man was carrying a mat on the Sabbath

Jews identified 39 works which were prohibited on the Sabbath by the Scripture

Each of these *father-works* had many *descendant-works* defined by rabbis

Examples: Father-Work

Descendant-Works

Plowing

Digging (dragging a chair might make a rut)  
(rubbing foot on pavement ok, not on dirt)

Carrying a burden

Wearing false teeth or extra clothing  
Tailor carrying needle, scribe carrying pen

Reaping

Plucking a head of wheat  
Pulling out a gray hair (don't look in mirror)

### Not a Mat Carrying Day (*John 5:11-18*)

What excuse did the man give for his horrible sin of carrying his mat?

John 5:11 = Blamed it on the man who healed him and told him to carry it

What became more important to the Jews than getting the man to put down his mat?

John 5:12-16 = Punishing the man who dares to heal on the Sabbath

How did Jesus respond to their reprimand?

John 5:17 = My Father and I are both at work, even on the Sabbath

How did this make the Jews even more upset? = Already hated Him enough to want Him dead

John 5:18 = He not only broke the Sabbath, but claimed to be equal with God

### The Sabbath Breaker (*John 5:16*)

Did Jesus have other conflicts with Jewish leaders because of healing on the Sabbath? = Don't read

Luke 13:10-17 = He healed a woman who had been crippled for 18 years

Luke 14:1-6 = He healed a man from dropsy while in the home of a Pharisee

John 9 = He healed a man born blind who was a known beggar

What else did Jesus do on the Sabbath that got the Pharisees mad? = Next week's lesson

Matthew 12:1-14 = Picking and eating grains of wheat from field and healing shriveled hand

How did Jesus try to put the Sabbath in perspective?

Mark 2:27 = *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*

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The Third Commandment - Luther's Small Catechism

What was the initial basis of the Jew's concern about working on the Sabbath?

Exodus 20:8 = The Third Commandment – Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Note: This is the first mention of doing no work on the Sabbath

More detailed regulations were given to Israel in Mosaic Law, never to Gentiles

What does the Third Commandment mean for us as God's people – the new Israel?

*We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word,  
but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.*

Does God require that we Christians of the New Testament observe the Sabbath?

Colossians 2:16-17 = Sabbath and other holy days were abolished by God, fulfilled by Jesus

Did God command us Christians to observe any day? = If you do, then do so to the Lord

Romans 14:5-6 (Galatians 4:10-11) = God did not command us to keep any day

Why, then, do we observe Sunday and other church festivals?

Hebrews 10:25 (Acts 2:42) = To have time and opportunity for public worship

What does God require of us in the Third Commandment?

1 Thessalonians 2:13 = Hold preaching and the Word of God sacred

Luke 11:28 = Hear it, learn it and meditate on it

Galatians 6:6 = Honor and support the preaching and teaching of the Word of God

Mark 16:15 = Diligently spread the Word of God

Closing Prayer

**Response** - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When has God reached out to me without me calling to Him?  
(*John 5:6; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 1:4-6; 1 Timothy 1:12-16*)
2. When have I recognized that God has reached out to me?  
(*John 5:6-7; 14:1-14; 20:10-18; 21:4-7; 1 Kings 19:9-18; Psalm 37:23-24; Luke 24:13-35*)
3. How have I responded to God when He has reached out to me?  
(*John 5:6-8; 10:1-16; 14:15, 22-24; 15:1-17; Luke 1:46-55; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:7-12*)
4. Do I recognize God's hand of grace and mercy when He takes care of me?  
(*John 5:12-13; Deuteronomy 12:7; Psalm 139; Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:25-34*)
5. How have I responded when I have recognized God's hand of grace and mercy in my life?  
(*John 5:14-15; 1 Chronicles 29:10-16; Matthew 10:40-42; 25:40; Luke 23:46; Hebrews 13:1-2*)