

Devotional Tools: SeniorWalk



John 5: 1-18 is about rules, brokenness, Jesus' oneness with the Father, and God's amazing love. We find Jesus back in Jerusalem on the Sabbath during a festival celebration. He and his disciples arrive at Bethesda, "the house of mercy," which has a pool. Ritual brought many invalids to the area, waiting for the water to be stirred up. They believed the first person to enter the pool when it stirred would be healed.

Jesus is aware of this ritual, and as he walks among the people he spots a lame man on his mat away from the water. Jesus approaches the man and asks "Do you want to be made well?"

John tells us that Jesus knows that the man has been there a long time. Jesus asks him no other questions, just this one. The man doesn't really answer the question, instead placing blame on others who will not help him. Jesus then instructs the man to stand up, take his mat, and walk.

The man must have felt something change within him, because he does just as he is told. We learn that he doesn't even know who Jesus is. We know that he does not thank Jesus, or question his instructions.

This gracious act of God brings accusation and ridicule from the religious leaders of the day. They find this healed man, who would dare to break the law of the Sabbath, carrying his mat. When confronted, he blames the one who told him to do it, indicating that he does not know who that man is.

Later, Jesus meets the healed man in the temple, approaches him, and gives him further instructions for his life. It is then that the healed man reveals Jesus to the religious leaders.

The confrontation the religious leaders have with Jesus about the interpretation of work on the Sabbath is the beginning of their persecution of Jesus and his teachings.

It is amazing that they concern themselves so much with keeping the rules that they miss the miracles that surround them. We need to keep our hearts and minds open to the possibilities and blessings in the world around us.

Lord, let us remember that rules are important, but they can bind us. Help us to live in you, and see the miracles around us through your eyes. Amen.