

LAME MAN HEALED BY JESUS ON THE SABBATH

John 5:1-30

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, invalid man, religious Jews

Key-location: Bethesda Pool in Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Jewish leaders expressed hostility: told ex-invalid that it was not lawful for him to carry bedroll on the Sabbath (Jn 5:10); persecuted Jesus (Jn 5:16); tried to kill Jesus (Jn 5:18).
- Jesus claimed: he was working just like his Father (Jn 5:17); called God his Father, making himself equal with God (Jn 5:18); he, the Son, did what the Father does (Jn 5:19); those who believe in Jesus have eternal life (Jn 5:24); Jesus will judge (Jn 5:27); he sought to please the one who sent him (Jn 5:30).
- Sabbath (Jn 5:9, 10, 16, 18).
- Pick up bedroll (Jn 5:8, 9, 10, 11, 12).

Key-attitudes:

- Invalid's self-pity.
- Jesus' authority when he spoke.
- After being healed, ex-invalid's confidence when talking about Jesus.
- Religious leaders' hostility toward Jesus.
- Jesus' intolerance toward religious leaders' legalistic attitudes.
- Jesus' self-confidence when he made claims about himself.

Initial-situation:

John the Baptist was imprisoned at the beginning of Jesus' second year of ministry. The multitudes that once followed John the Baptist began following Jesus. During Jesus' second year of ministry, he was popular with the crowds; however, religious leaders began to oppose him. Jesus made his residence in the city of Capernaum, in Galilee. Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for a religious feast.

Initial-problem:

Jesus asked an invalid man, who was lying on the porch by a pool, if he wanted to get well.

Final-situation:

Jesus declared that he did not try to please himself, but the one who sent him.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a religious feast. In Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate is a pool with five covered porches called Bethesda. Many sick and disabled people were lying on the porches beside the pool. They were the blind, the lame, and paralyzed. One man lying there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

Jesus asked the invalid, "Do you want to get well?"

The invalid replied, "Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water starts moving. While I'm trying to get in, someone else gets there first."

Jesus told the invalid, "Stand up! Pick up your bedroll and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his bedroll and walked (Jn 5:1-8).

This happened on a Sabbath day. Jews stopped the man telling him, "It's the Sabbath. The law forbids you to carry your bedroll on the Sabbath day."

The ex-invalid replied, "The man who cured me told me, 'Pick up your bedroll and walk.'"

The Jews asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick your bedroll up and walk?"

The man didn't know, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd.

Later, Jesus found the ex-invalid at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse might happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well (Jn 5:8-15).

The Jews persecuted Jesus because he healed on the Sabbath. Jesus told them, "My Father is always at his work, so I, too, am working." Then the Jews tried to kill Jesus for two reasons. First, Jesus was breaking the Sabbath law. Second, Jesus was calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God (Jn 5:16-18).

Jesus answered the Jews, "I tell you the truth, the Son can't do anything by himself. He can do only what he sees his Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. Any person who doesn't honor the Son doesn't honor the Father who sent him" (Jn 5:19-23).

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned as guilty. He has crossed over from death to life. Don't be surprised at this. A time is coming when all who are dead in their graves will hear the Son of God's voice and come out. Those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned as guilty. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I don't seek to please myself. I seek to please him who sent me (Jn 5:24-30).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What question did Jesus ask the invalid lying at the pool?
2. Why were the religious leaders upset at Jesus for healing the invalid?
3. What warning did Jesus give the ex-invalid?
4. Why did the religious leaders persecute Jesus?
5. How did Jesus answer the religious leaders?
6. Why did Jesus' answer increase their anger?
7. In what ways does Jesus say he is equal to his father?
8. What is the work that both God the Father and Jesus the Son are doing?
9. What does Jesus say about how people receive eternal life?
10. If Jesus passed by our "pool" today, what questions would he ask about our deepest need?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Legalistic religious people become so concerned about their petty rules and man-made structures that they condemn the people who are experiencing God.** The religious people considered Jesus' healing the invalid on the Sabbath a transgression of the Sabbath law. The man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years was walking; yet the Pharisees were concerned about their petty rules and not the life and health of a human being (Jn 5:10).
2. **Spiritual needs are of greater importance than physical needs.** It was a great miracle for the man who had been paralyzed to suddenly walk. But the man needed a greater miracle. He needed to turn from his sins and receive God's forgiveness (Jn 5:14).
3. **People can limit God's working in their lives by refusing to see God at work if he acts outside of their restricted religious views.** The Jewish leaders saw both a mighty miracle and a broken rule, but they considered the miracle as trash because their rule had been broken (Jn 5:10).
4. **The man Jesus was either the Son of God who was equal with God, or he was a blasphemous liar.** Jesus identified himself with God, his Father. Jesus claimed to be equal with God. Jesus claimed that his works were God's works (Jn 5:17-23).

5. **A person's attitude toward the deity of Christ is a dividing line between faith and unbelief.** Jesus claimed to be equal with God (Jn 5:18-20). Either Jesus was telling the truth or he was lying and blaspheming. If he were telling the truth, Jesus deserved to be worshiped; however, if he were lying, he deserved to die. The religious Jews thought Jesus was lying and deserved to die (Jn 5:18). Those who have eternal life because they believe in Jesus are convinced Jesus was telling the truth (Jn 5:24).
6. **Jesus will be the supreme judge on Judgment Day.** People who hear Jesus' words and believe him will not be condemned as guilty. When Jesus judges, he will seek to please his Father who sent him (Jn 5:24-30).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Interaction with Characters in Story:

Invite listeners to interact with characters in the story with the question, "What would you like to say to the following characters in the story?"

- To the complaining invalid who is full of self-pity.
- To the ex-invalid after Jesus tells him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse might happen to you."
- To the religious leaders who wanted to kill Jesus.