Lesson 6 [Chapter 5] "The Paralytic by the pool"

Remember:

Last lesson, John 4, Jesus speaks with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well and offers her "living water," symbolizing eternal life, while teaching that true worship is in spirit and truth rather than tied to a place; through her testimony many Samaritans come to believe in Him as the Savior of the world.

Lesson Goal:

Just as Jesus's words brought physical healing, they can bring spiritual renewal and strength to our lives. Trust in His promises and let His words guide your path.

Lesson opener:



Where are you stuck in your life today?

The man in today's gospel is stuck, for thirty-eight years he has been sitting on his … mat. That's a long time. Every day is the same. He waits and watches for the water in the pool to be stirred up. He is saying, "As soon as I get to the water my life will be better".

Sometimes it feels like our life in general is stuck. When I am stuck, I live an "as-soon-as" life. Most of us know what that's like. We say to ourselves or to one another, "As soon as this or that happens everything will be better. I'll be happy. My problems will go away. I'll be satisfied. All will be well."

Where are you stuck today? There's only one thing left to do.

“Listen to Him! Stand up, take your mat and walk.” That’s Jesus’ call to each of us.

Lesson Body:

This lesson is long and has a lot of theology, so for the sake of time, we will focus on the miracle and some of the main theology verses 5:19, 22, 24, 25 and 39.

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15

In this chapter, we find the meeting between the Lord Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Physician, and the man of Bethesda who had suffered from illness for 38 years.

Bethesda is not Bethsaida as it is written in some versions. The Hebrew word for it is Bethchasday which means "the house of mercy.” It may have taken its name from God's mercies that were revealed in the healing of those who stepped down into it.

Some writers believe that the angel did not go down into the pool every day, but rather during certain seasons, especially the three great feasts. This, God allowed so that the people may be sure that, though they were deprived of prophets and miracles, God did not forget them but cared for them.

This sick man spent more than half his life beside the pool suffering paralysis and unable to live in a habitual daily way. The patience of the paralytic is amazing because he remained thirty-eight years waiting every year to be freed from his sickness. He stood fast and did not leave the place.

If the Lord had made all the sick people there well with one word, this would have seemed a show of divine miraculous work. However, the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ was preoccupied with the faith of all and their spiritual healing first as they watched the miracle and believed.

"Do you want to be made well?" Why did Jesus ask him if he wished to get well? Isn’t that an obvious question?

With that question, Christ wanted to arouse in the man faith, hope, and the strong desire to be made well.

Usually, when a person lies in his bed for all those years, he is furious, but when this man heard the question of the Lord Jesus Christ, he did not angrily say, "Don't you see me watching for the angel to come down to stir the water? How can you ask me if I wanted to be made well?" Instead, he answered the Lord Jesus Christ with amazing humility.

Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." [8]

The Lord offered him healing in a manner that did not occur to his mind. It was not by putting him into the pool when the water was stirred up, but by a word proceeding from His divine mouth. He commanded with power and the sick man was healed.

He asked him to take up the bed to be sure that his cure was complete and that he did not obtain physical strength gradually, but immediately.

The story of the healing of this paralytic was linked with baptism since the early church. The work of baptism that raises the believer from an incurable illness to testify to the new life that has become his in Jesus Christ.

Why did the Lord order that man to take up his bed on the Sabbath, when the Law forbids such work?

The Lord has shown that the Jews misunderstood the meaning of Sabbath. He is the Lord of the Sabbath. They observed it literally missing the right spiritual meaning that it is for the glory of God and the benefit of man. By this act, the miracle will be announced.

The leaders of the Jews argued with him and accused him of breaking the Sabbath.

He told them He who healed me told me so, he stressed the fact that It is impossible for Him who has the power to heal in this sovereign manner to make a mistake or do evil.

He was almost saying to them: you are mad to order me not to consider Him a teacher, He Who relieved me of my long sickness, and you ask me not to obey all His commands.

When that man felt how merciful God was to him, he went to the temple probably to thank God for healing him. Jesus met him to heal him from sin after He healed his body.

The Lord Christ made it clear for the man that He knew the secrets of the past: "Sin no more", thus explaining that the man's past sin was the cause of his long illness.

Instead of believing, the Jews desired to kill Him.

Takeaway:

Jesus stopped. Jesus approached him. Jesus offered to heal him. Jesus had a heart of compassion when no one else did. We need to follow Jesus' example and have a heart of compassion for those around us even when they don't deserve it.

The Jews were judgmental, Do not grow judgmental in your outlook. Do not be strict to others and always look at others' lives or ministry and find fault with the way they are doing things. YOU live the right kind of life in front of God. He desires you to be filled with compassion, love, and mercy for others.



Honor the Father and the Son 5:16-23

The Lord Christ compares Himself to the Father: just as the Father works on the Sabbath day as on other days, so Christ can do the same. This comparison has its danger for the Jewish leaders because it conveys the meaning of equality between Jesus and the Father in the divine plan and work.

Verse 17: God cares for the concerns of everything He does and He directs His creation. Do not think that My Father rested on the Sabbath means that He did not work. He is working even now and likewise I am working. And just as the Father is without fatigue, so is the Son without fatigue.

The Father and the Son are like fire, show me its flame without its light, and I will show you God the Father without the Son.

Therefore, 'the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do.' This implies that 'He sees' and 'is born' concerning the Son are both the same thing. All things that the Son has are from the Father, everything He has power over, or He is the same, everything is from the Father.

His justification of the sanctity of the Sabbath through Divine work, and not through refraining from work, bore the testimony that He was equal with God whom He called His Father. Therefore, they hated Him more, because there is nothing that incites them more than His assertion of His divine authority. Therefore, they sought more to kill Him.

His answer was not 'Why do you want to kill me..., I am not equal with my Father.' Jesus didn't say that. He explained that they are equal.

The Son cannot do anything of Himself because of the unity that cannot be split from the Father. If you ask: then, what is the meaning of Christ saying, "the Son can do nothing of Himself"? It means that He cannot do anything opposed or strange to His Father. This statement proves His equality with His Father and His agreement with Him.

As the statement "it is impossible for God to make a mistake" does not charge Him with weakness but testifies to His inexpressible power.

The Father judges no one, not because He has no authority, but because this is His pleasure that the Son who sacrificed Himself judges humanity. The Father created us through the Son, redeemed us through His death, and judges us through Him.

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30

As human beings love to live on this earth, they are promised life; and as they fear death very much, they are promised eternal life. Verse 24.

With the coming of the Lord Christ, the hour has come so that the spirit rises from its death or its separation from God [the source of its life], and enjoys the new life here, which prepares the believer for the second coming of the Lord Christ when the dead will arise to everlasting life.

The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

If He bore witness of Himself without the witness of the Father through the prophets, and without performing divine, miraculous works, they would have had an excuse to consider His witness false.

He mentioned in His conversation three witnesses: the first is the works that He did, the second His Father's witness, and the third is John the Baptist's announcement of Him.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; these are they which testify of Me." [39] As though He says to them: 'It is not enough for you to pride yourselves upon possessing the Scriptures, and that you read them. It is necessary that you search them diligently so that you may enjoy your redemption and eternal life, because all the Scriptures revolve round My coming to you.

Lesson Delivery Idea:

Delivered for purpose:

1. Jesus knows your condition like this paralytic man:

Jesus knows you perfectly. He knows everything about you, inside out, and all you have ever felt or thought or done. He knows your condition, He knows your pain, He knows your desires in life.

2. Jesus is near the brokenhearted.
   Jesus chooses to go to this pool. He didn't stumble thereby accidentally. He knew what He was doing. Jesus moves toward need, not comfort, toward brokenhearted people, not the self-righteous.
   Today, you may feel lonely. You may think there is no one to help me. I am all alone. What will I do Lord? Remember, God is there to help you.
3. Jesus has the power to deliver us.
   This man had a choice. He could start walking or just lie down in the same condition. There were many reasons for him not to walk. It was a Sabbath day. Today we have a choice – To act against our circumstances, act against our negative thoughts or continue in the same situation. When he listened to the voice of God, his condition changed. **For 38 long years, the mat carried him, now he is carrying the mat.**
4. Purpose of Deliverance – Separation.
   My aim in healing your body is the healing of your spiritual life. I have healed you. Now, live in this power. Let the gift of healing, the gift of my free grace, be a means to your holiness or separation from sin. This is where we are delivered for purpose.
   He warns him that, if he turns away, mocks this gift, or makes an idol out of his health, and embraces sin as his way of life, he will perish at the final judgment.
   What is the worst thing that could happen to him? Jesus says that there is something worse that could happen to him [us too if we don't repent].
   We have a cliché of sorts that we say to one another when we are suffering, the cliché is quite true. "It could always be worse." Something worse could happen to us. As terrible as our suffering can be and as difficult it can be to deal with the challenges we have in life, there is worse: eternal punishment. There is something far worse to watch for.

Memory Verse: 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1