

Week 7 ~ Lord over Sickness & Sabbath (John 5:1-18)

April 4&5, 2020

Crossroads Christian Church

By: Phil Heller, Lead Pastor

- Welcome to my home again. Thanks for engaging with us in worship this weekend.
- I know this time is really different for all of us and presents so many challenges and changes
- Not leaving our homes for much has many advantages and “opportunities for growth”
- Our family has enjoyed a little more relaxed pace, found some time to play games, watch some shows, and do some simple projects around the house
- We’ve tried to stay in touch with our extended family, our neighbors, our small group, and care for others as we all walk through this together
- It can be unsettling.
- I know as man, a husband, a father, a leader for our congregation, a son of older parents, every day presents new information to process, things to think through, adjustments to make
- And there feels like a looming cloud over us, even when it’s sunny and warm outside
- I’m finding comfort in God’s Word...listening to each of the Psalm 91 posts from a variety of people who call Crossroads home...my daily Bible reading through Bible now in Joshua and Judges, nightly walks with my wife, worship music, and our journey through the book of John

- As the leadership here at Crossroads, we are continuing to find ways to engage with our church family on the weekends and throughout the week
- We are constantly discussing how to proceed by heading the recommendations of our government officials and the CDC, and making adjustment along the way to help care for our congregation and community
- Our decision to prepare this service and broadcast it at our normal worship service times through our online platforms is something we are continuing to tweak and create ways for you to engage in worship and connect with God. I hope you are leaning in.
- I’m very proud of the many ways the Crossroads team is creating meaningful content and attempting to be as approachable as possible, as well as identifying ways to serve our community
- Thank you to each of you who are giving generously, serving faithfully, and caring for your neighbors
- And if you are in need, we are here to help...whatever your need
- The Response Fund we’ve created is building and is being utilized
- See our website at ccgo.com/covid19 to express a need or to volunteer Need-a-Neighbor
- We’ve considered stopping our journey through John for this season, but I continue to feel the providential hand of God pointing us to the truths found about Jesus in this Gospel and how it relates perfectly to what we are going through together in this moment
- Who Jesus is, how he lives and how he loves truly brings me hope and direction in this crisis, and it hope it does you too.
- I continue to ask God to speak to me and through me
- Grab a copy of the Bible turn with me to John 5
- If you call Crossroads home, we’ve made it to the start of another chapter in the Gospel of John. If you are new in joining us, we are trying to learn how to live and love like Jesus in the midst of a world-wide pandemic and every day of our lives
- Today, we will see another encounter Jesus has with someone ill and see Him reveal his identity and power. John labels this as the 3rd sign or proof Jesus is fully God & Messiah journal
- Last week we saw a man who sought Jesus out in faith that He would heal his sick son, and as a result of that healing, the man was convinced Jesus was not just a miracle worker, but Savior
- Today, Jesus will encounter a man who never moves to a place of faith in Jesus but is healed, nonetheless.
- Begin reading with me in **John 5:1-9a**

- There are a few things I want us to focus on today in this passage

-Since it's Palm Sunday, it's cool to see Jesus practicing his faith by participating in the religious festivals in Jerusalem. The specific festival is not identified but we know Jesus was there on purpose. We will see him make this journey several times in the next few chapters.

-It seems like his purpose was to encounter this man who was sitting with a large number of others who were sick, disabled, impacted physically by illness or disease

-They gathered under the porches around a pool called Bethesda- "house of mercy"=2 springs
[The Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, aka Bethesda Naval Hospital, one of the most prominent US Military medical centers in the Washington DC area and the United States, having served numerous U.S. presidents since the 20th century]

-This location was rumored to provide healing when the waters were stirred by an angel

-If you noticed when we read through this passage, the NIV and other translations, does not have a verse 4. It isn't found in the original manuscripts and seems to be added to explain vs 7

-Last week we talked about faith beginning with reason. There is archaeological proof of the existence of Bethesda with 2 pools covered by 5 porches. Present day = St Anne's Church

-We can have faith in God's Word as true, but we are also required to have faith even when we can't see. Just like we learned last week from the father who took Jesus at his word without seeing

-The man who encounters Jesus is lame, not like my dad jokes, but meaning he couldn't walk

-Jesus comes up to him and asked him a pretty weird question: "Do you want to get well?"

-The obvious answer is, "Yes! Of course. I've been coming to this pool for years waiting to be healed." He tells Jesus that he hasn't had anyone help him to get to the water first.

-But why does Jesus ask him this question? Of course, there are lots of theories

- Is he really in need? Have you ever wondered that when you see someone begging?
- Are his excuses legit? He seems to be a little whiny and blamy (not a word)
- He would lose the possibility for charity/alms if he was healed
- Does Jesus need him to "do his part" or to show some type of faith to be healed?

-Jesus doesn't play games. He's a straight shooter and isn't manipulative. He doesn't have to be. As fully God, he knows all things. The NIV says "he learned" but he knew (omniscient)

-It's a simple invitation Jesus makes just like saying, "come follow me", "are you thirsty", "can I have a drink", "who do you say I am"

-It's a chance for Jesus to reveal his true identity; to show the heart and power of God

-Just like he healed the boy in Chapter 4, Jesus heals this man with just his words: Pick up your mat and walk!

-Here's the first take away: **JESUS IS CARING AND CAPABLE!**

-Jesus sees your financial situation; your health concern; the stress at work or at home trying to still work remotely, homeschool your kids, and keep sane; the strain in your relationships; the fear and anxiety you are feeling...He not only sees, he cares and he can do something about it!

-Jesus heals this man with his powerful word.

HEBREWS 1:1-3

-Jesus came into the world as the WORD (John 1:1) revealing all of God's character and power in the flesh.

-When we see Jesus have compassion on this man AND heal him, we should take heart and know that's how present God is and how capable he is!

DISCUSSION QUESTION: How have you seen God show up in the midst of this crisis, or some other crisis, in your life. Where are you still waiting and trusting He will and can?

-This man had been paralyzed for 38 years. Puts our "quarantine" for 45 days into perspective

-Our family has been taking comfort and finding courage from stories of people who have endured great challenges, like Ann Frank who hid for 2 years in an attic to avoid the Nazi during WWII in 1942 only to head to a concentration camp and die there of Typhus in 1945.

-You might ask, "Where was God then?" We need to remember, sickness, illness, and death are from the devil, not God. And notice Jesus healed 1 of the people lying at Bethesda not all.

-We must trust his compassion, his power, and his sovereignty. It's not multiple choice

-This man is healed by Jesus and takes up his mat (picture a flatbed made of straw) as a sign that he is completely healed and now strong.

-Now the story takes a turn here. And we see our next takeaway: **JESUS IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL MORE THAN THE PHYSICAL.**
JOHN 5:9b-15

-From Chapters 5-10 we see Jesus going back and forth to Jerusalem celebrating feasts, teaching and healing as proof of his deity, and facing growing tension and persecution from the religious leaders

-They notice this man carrying his mat on the Sabbath and move in for an interrogation

-The Ten Commandments required God's people to "honor the sabbath day by keeping it holy" referencing how God rested on day 7 after creating the world in 6 days

-The OT law instructed people to rest 1 day, to refrain from their normal daily work from the other 6 days, and included everyone in the house.

-The religious leaders had created 39 ways to define work. They were rigid and made this a burden for people and created it into something God never really intended. [read list]

-In fact, the religious leaders didn't notice or acknowledge that this man who had been paralyzed for 38 years was now healed, but rather were fixated on his disobedience to their man-made rules. This shows a lot about their heart.

-They neglected the laws about caring for your neighbor and those suffering!

DISCUSSION QUESTION: What is a dumb rule by your parent(s)? [bouncing ball & broke globe]

-The purpose of the sabbath was for resting, for sustainment and also for renewal. It's God's creation and command and designed for His purposes, for God's work not ours!

-The honoring of the Sabbath became a real contention point between the religious leaders and Jesus. They accused him of breaking God's Law, being a demon, and rejected him as the Messiah because he healed people on the Sabbath. They focused on the physical not spiritual.

-Jesus' responses to them not only reveals his identity but his mission:

- "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Matthew 12:8
- "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Mark 2:27
- "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" Luke 6:9

-We have been challenging our Crossroads family to make space for God during this Lenten season...none of us knew how much time we'd get to work on this 😊

-How are you using this time? Are you finding it hard to focus on God? Are you making time, with all the upheaval and interruption to your normal schedule, to find time to connect with God? Is this an opportunity to reorder your day, your priorities, the way you live your life, to make God the center of your life, not just the first thing on your "to do" list?

[Re-watch the Teaching Night at cccgo.com/teachingnight, resources provided]

-Don't make it into legalism and a burden, but a time to connect deeper with God

-Sabbath rest is much more than resting just from physical labor. It's finding satisfaction in God!

-The man is interrogated by the religious leaders, who want to know, who told him to carry his mat on the Sabbath, again missing the point it is the same person who healed him!

-This man didn't know who Jesus was, but John says Jesus ran into him in the temple later

-I think Jesus sought him out again because He had more business to take care of...

JOHN 5:14, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

-Again, there are lots of ideas about what Jesus means by this statement but I'm going to give you my best-informed interpretation...

-I feel Jesus is saying, "your physical condition is not your biggest concern...it's your spiritual condition!"

-This isn't the only time Jesus challenged someone to stop sinning when healing a person

MATTHEW 9:1-8

-Jesus' mission on earth wasn't physical but spiritual in focus...he came to save us from our sins

-While sickness, disease and death concern Jesus, his ultimate concern is the spiritual condition of our hearts. He wants people to be whole spiritually, to have abundant life, to live eternally,

[Ross Langston, YTH YouTube channel, what can't be taken away from us! Keep eyes on Jesus]

-Jesus focus was on the eternal. Ours should be too!

COLOSSIANS 3:1-3, 15-17

-When we take our eyes off the physical, or temporary things of this earth, and focus our hearts and minds on Jesus, we have peace no matter what happens.

-We make our ambition to serve others in the name of Jesus.

-Is there someone who has been sick for 38 years in your life and needs your help to have Jesus heal them physically, or more importantly, save them spiritually?

-Who can you encourage to remain strong in their faith during this time?

How can you connect with your family, your small group, those you serve with and encourage them to have hope and peace?

-How can we live and love like Jesus more in this moment?

-Don't expect the world to understand or even applaud!

-Jesus faced the growing tension head on with the religious leaders.

-He continually stayed focused on this mission throughout his ministry on earth

-One last takeaway: JESUS IS CONFIDENT IN HIS IDENTITY

JOHN 5:16-18

-Jesus came to do his father's work. Remember in 4:34 he called this "my food" = satisfaction

-He had declared this commitment since he was age 12 in the temple when his parents couldn't find him

-He continued to declare this commitment in the face of accusations

-He knew His identity as the Son of God = equality with God

-He knew what was important to God and spent his time focused on doing God's work!

-He also stresses that God is always working. He doesn't sleep or slumber. He holds the world together at all times. We can have confidence and hope in this truth.

-Jesus sees you. He knows what your facing and where you are struggling. He not only sees but cares. Trust Him to work in your life.

-Remember, He's most interested in your spiritual condition.

-The ultimate healing anyone can receive is to have eternal life

-He is capable of taking away our sins, no matter what we've done.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

-Hear Jesus asking you, "Do you want to be saved?"

-Accept His invitation to heal you spiritually by offering you grace and forgiveness. You receive it by placing your faith and trust in Him, acknowledging you can't do it on your own and need Jesus' death to pay the penalty for your sins. Just like the man at the pool, Jesus is seeking you

-If you are ready to accept that invitation today, please contact us at 812-858-8668 or respond right now in the chat. We want to help you receive Jesus as Savior today.

-And finally, as we all learn to live and love like Jesus, let's have eyes to see those who are hurting around us and offer to help in Jesus name

-We are continually identifying and posting ways to serve others during this crisis at cccgo.com/covid19 and the Need-a-Neighbor platform is designed to help mobilize the church to meet the needs of this community.

-And keep sharing the hope you have through your faith with others!

PRAY

Have a wonderful Palm Sunday!

List of Sabbath:

Sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing or beating or dyeing wool, spinning, weaving, making 2 loops, weaving 2 threads, tying a knot, loosening a knot, sewing 2 stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting or curing it's skin, scraping it or cutting it up, writing 2 letters, erasing in order to write 2

letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, striking with a hammer, taking out an aught
from one domain to the other