

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

The Case for Jesus
John 5:1-24, 31-40

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Write John 5: 24 on a white board or large piece of paper or make copies for each participant. Copy the sheet given at the end of the Worship Time and cut the strips to give to each person.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

Jesus, Lord to Me, *The Worship Hymnal* #300; CCLI #16976

Victory Chant, *The Worship Hymnal* #299; CCLI #23873

You Are My All in All, *The Worship Hymnal* #143; CCLI #825356

Be Still and Know, *The Worship Hymnal* #457; CCLI #583265

Take Time to Be Holy, *The Worship Hymnal* #587; CCLI #93748 Public Domain

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***The Case for Jesus*****Focal Text**

John 5:1-24, 31-40

Background

John 4:43—5:47

Main Idea

Jesus as God's Son has the authority to offer life in its fullness.

Question to Explore

Why do you believe in Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to testify of why they believe in Jesus.

Gathering together:**Sing:**

Jesus, Lord to Me, *The Worship Hymnal* #300; CCLI # 16976

Victory Chant, *The Worship Hymnal* #299; CCLI #23873

First thoughts:

Why **do** you believe in Jesus? This is a question we need to be asked and to ask ourselves from time to time. Is our belief just a habit; is it something we “inherited” from our parents; is it a part of the culture in which we live? Or is it a passionate belief in the Saviour Jesus Christ who said of Himself: ***I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.***

Today we will examine the account of the healing of a man who didn't even know who had healed him. He was near Jesus; he heard Jesus speak to him saying ***“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”*** He did as Jesus commanded and he was healed. But

he was still ignorant about who Jesus was. Later, he met Jesus in the temple and Jesus spoke to him about his spiritual condition ***“See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”*** These are forceful words about a spiritual disability even more serious than his physical disability had been.

The focus of the passage is not really the healing of the man, but the power of Jesus to do the work of God in any place at any time. He could do that because He is equal with God. The Father raises the dead and gives them life and the Son gives life to those who believe in Him.

We believe in Jesus because Jesus said ***the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.***

Watch carefully in the study today for great spiritual truths about the nature of Christ. Answer anew for yourself the question “Why do I believe in Jesus?”

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

The Case for Jesus

Focal Text

John 5:1-24, 31-40

Background

John 4:43—5:47

Main Idea

Jesus as God's Son has the authority to offer life in its fullness.

Question to Explore

Why do you believe in Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to testify of why they believe in Jesus.

Introduction to your personal study:

Spend time examining information about Jewish feasts and festivals which is given in the Teacher Preparation materials below. If you have access to a computer you may want to do some additional study. This will enrich your understanding of many biblical accounts.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

John 5: 1-4

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

It is some time later. Jesus has been ministering in Galilee in the north of Palestine. Now he goes to Jerusalem for an unnamed feast. The following time table is helpful in understanding the various events in the book of John. Since the feast is unnamed, it may not be one of the three major feasts which required attendance in Jerusalem. Or as Hendriksen points out in his analysis, it may have been Passover in the Year 28 A.D. or the third year of the public ministry of Jesus (Hendriksen, W. **New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House. 1988. Page 188).

March	April	May	October	December
<i>During the Year 26 A.D.</i>				
				Dedication
<i>During the Year 27 A.D.</i>				
Purim	Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles	Dedication
	2:13; 23			
<i>During the Year 28 A.D.</i>				
Purim	Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles	Dedication
	5:1			
<i>During the Year 29 A.D.</i>				
Purim	Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles	Dedication
	6:4		7:2, 37	
<i>During the Year 30 A.D.</i>				
Purim	Passover	Pentecost		
	12:1; 13:1; 19:14	Acts 2:1		

The Feast of Purim (Lots) commemorates a time when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination. It was not a pilgrim feast. It was celebrated in the local synagogues where for that occasion the book of Esther was read amid great joy.

Passover (Pesach) commemorated God's deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt. Jews observe the Passover meal; Jewish males travel to Jerusalem. The Feast of Unleavened Bread follows Passover on the 15th day of the first month until the 21st. The Jews ate unleavened bread for 7 days. They did not work on the first day. It marked the beginning of barley harvest. These feasts were the first of three annual trips to Jerusalem.

Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) marked the end of the early-summer wheat harvest. The Hebrew word for 'week' is also translated "seven". Literally, Pentecost was exactly 7 weeks to the day after the Feast of Firstfruits. It is the second of three annual trips to Jerusalem.

Feast of Tabernacles or Booths (Sukkot) marked the beginning of a new agricultural year. It was symbolized by the construction of booths decorated with greenery for the harvesters. It is the 3rd of three annual trips to Jerusalem.

Feast of Dedication (Lights or Hanukkah) was instituted around 164 B.C. after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. The temple was cleansed after he had desecrated it. The feast was commemorated over an 8 day period of lighting candles on a 8-candle lamp.

Other feasts include **Feast of Firstfruits** which accompanied the offering of the first harvested barley to God; the **Feast of Trumpets**; and the **Day of Atonement**. (www.bibletrack.org Jewish Feasts Commemorated in Scripture).

The events of the feast are not the focus of John's narrative in Chapter 5. He begins by describing a place and a situation.

The Sheep Gate may refer to the gate by which sheep were led for the purpose of being sacrificed in the nearby temple court. There was a pool nearby known as Bethesda (house of mercy) or Bethsatha which in the Aramaic is house of the olive-tree. The latter is more favored by scholars today.

There were five porticoes or covered colonnades which protected the sick and lame from inclement weather. The pool was identified during the repair of the Church of St. Anne in northeast Jerusalem several years ago.

The pool was deep enough to swim in and beneath it was a subterranean stream which from time to time bubbled up and disturbed the water of the pool. The popular belief

was that an angel disturbed the water and that the first person in the water after it was disturbed would be healed. This is explained in verse 4 in some translations ***For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.*** However, not all early manuscripts contained this explanation and the Revised Standard Version does not include it. “The Jews were in the habit of attributing all favours to the ministry of the angels of God. In the case of Bethesada there does not appear to have been anything miraculous, but the waters seem to have been endued with strong medicinal properties, especially after a periodical agitation” (Barnes, A. **Notes on the New Testament: Explanatory and Practical.** Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965, page 225). ***Whosoever then first.*** This does not mean that only one was healed, and that the first one—but that those who first descended into the pool were healed. The strong medicinal properties of the waters soon subsided, and those who could not at first enter into the pool were obliged to wait for the return of the agitation...***Was made whole.*** It is not implied that this was done instantaneously or by a miracle. The water had such properties that he was healed, though probably gradually” (Barnes, page 226). This is in contrast to the healing of the man instantaneously by Jesus.

This was the gathering place for people with many physical needs. They may have come with hope of being the first in the pool. They also may have been there to be with people who were like them. Possibly they were the recipients of small gifts of coins or food from passersby.

John 5: 5-9a

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

“Sir”, the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

A man who had been an invalid for most, if not all of his life, is the one chosen to be healed. First, however, Jesus asks him, “Do you want to get well?” Jesus is still talking about physical well-being though we will see later in the story that He is most concerned about his spiritual well-being. Does the man want to confront the realities of life as a whole person? Has he grown accustomed to the small bits of food and comfort that are tossed his way? Can he earn a living in the real world?

He answers by telling Jesus that he would get into the pool and hope for healing, but he has no one to help him get in the pool. He apparently moved so slowly that even

though he tried to get in on his own, he was not able to be one of the first. There seemed little hope for him.

Perhaps he did experience hope, however, as Jesus spoke to him. “Was this man going to help him get into the pool?” he might have thought. How long a wait would they have before the waters were stirred again?

But Jesus told him to pick up his mat and walk. The man was immediately cured. He did as Jesus told him to do—he picked up his mat and walked.

His healing has no connection to the pool. There was a miracle which took place, but it was not the miracle of an angel stirring the water. It was the Son of God Himself acting on behalf of this needy man and the force of His presence and the love of God expressed caused the man to do just as he had been instructed—he picked up his mat and walked.

“Miracles do not always bring the healed to mature faith. The invalid believed in the healing power of the waters. How long he had waited is not specified, but he had been helpless for thirty-eight years. Jesus challenged his faith, asking if he wanted to be healed and telling him to get up, pick up his pallet, and walk. Imagine—for thirty-eight years he had not walked; now Jesus commanded him to get up and walk. He did just that. Bodily healing came. Spiritual sickness remained (v 14). Healing the body did not bring loyalty and trust. Fear of religious powers (v 15) remained stronger than trust in the Healer’s power. We must ask for more than physical healing. We must ask for faith and the power to stop sinning. That is the greater miracle” (**Disciple’s Study Bible**, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, page 1324).

A miraculous cure is always a bit hard to comprehend. Twenty-two years after his healing of an incurable throat cancer, one man is still amazed by it. Life goes on with its ordinary good and bad. This man grows tired and burdened by life, but overarching it all, for him and for his family, is the incredible gift of healing given by God.

The man healed by the Pool of Bethsatha experienced healing “all at once”. John stresses the sudden and complete character of his cure. Once more the glory of the Son of God stands revealed. The man will have the rest of his life to understand the amazing miracle which he has experienced.

John 5: 9b-13

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, “Pick up your mat and walk.”

So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

Did the Jewish leaders just happen to see this man and focus on his carrying his mat? Did a report of the healing reach their ears and they associated it with Jesus? At any rate, they focused on the transgression of the Sabbath regulation against burden bearing. No one was supposed to carry anything on the Sabbath. “The Jews are not quoting Scripture but rather a passage from the Mishna, a collection of teachings of the rabbis from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D., in which various classes of work are outlined (Mishna Shabbath 7:2/39)” (Card, M. **The Parable of Joy**, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Discovery House Publishers, 2007, page 85).

However, in Jeremiah 17:21; Nehemiah 13:15, and Exodus 20: 8-10 are admonitions about resting on the Sabbath which include the concept of not bearing burdens. They apply to commerce. They refer as well to the use of servants in that commerce which did not allow them to observe the Sabbath.

“The Jews observed the Sabbath superstitiously, and Jesus took every opportunity to convince them of their error, and to restore the day to its proper observance, Matthew 12:1-11; Luke 6:9, 13, 14-17; 14:5. This method he took to show them what the law of God really permitted on that day, and that works of necessity and mercy were lawful” (Barnes, page 227).

Perhaps the man was genuinely concerned about having broken the Sabbath law and the consequences of that. Perhaps he was just trying to explain his circumstance: he was an invalid and waiting at the Pool of Bethsatha; now he was well and he no longer needed to be there waiting for a miracle. But he certainly didn’t want to leave his mat – perhaps his only possession – at the pool. Perhaps he was clinging to the mat as a requisite for the healing. ***The man who made me well said to me, “Pick up your mat and walk”.*** He was doing what the man said; he was obeying what he was told to do.

Some commentators feel the man was laying the blame on Jesus to avoid punishment himself. That would be a reasonable reaction for a totally powerless person when confronted by the leaders of the Jews. Further, he was dealing with the reality of what had just occurred. Jesus had slipped away and the man did not know who had healed him. A miracle of unbelievable dimensions and he didn’t even know who to thank.

However, Michael Card is one who says “The example of the man of excuses is a terrible lesson. Here is one who met the Son, felt His power, was even healed by Him, and yet betrays Him. Truly this is the other Judas of the Scriptures” (Card, page 85). Before judging too harshly this man, however, we must think of the multitude of times in which God has given us good gifts and we failed to acknowledge Him as giver or the magnitude of the gift.

John 5: 14-15

Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

There might be many reasons that the man was at the temple. We like to think that he was there to thank God for his healing. However, Jesus encounters him there with the admonition to stop sinning in order to avoid something worse than physical disability. The sin to which Jesus refers is not specified. Certainly, it would be the sin of ignoring the power of God which healed him. Jesus made it clear that his spiritual need was greater even than his physical need had been. This is a reminder to us as we encounter physical difficulties that we must also attend to spiritual needs. As we pray for the sick, we should also pray for spiritual strength and healing.

The man did report to the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. There is no indication of malice on his part – he had no reason to get Jesus in trouble. The Jewish leaders – people of authority – had asked him who healed him. He didn’t know at the time, but he later did know so he informed them. Perhaps he was afraid that he would still be punished for having carried his mat on the Sabbath.

John 5: 16-18

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

The Jews had sufficient reason in their minds to persecute Jesus for breaking the Sabbath. But Jesus adds to their anger by telling them that he worked on the Sabbath because God was his Father and the work of God in redemption and care was never done. “Jesus’ repeated use of the word *work* is meant to goad the Jews. ‘My Father is working now’ implies that He is also working on the Sabbath. The work the Father gave Him to do is for the Sabbath as well. The rabbinic tradition said, ‘God still does two works on the Sabbath: He creates and He judges’” (Card, page 85).

It is difficult for us to understand the intense reaction the Jewish leaders would have had to this announcement. For them, it was blasphemy of the most radical sort. To not stand against it would have meant that they were prepared to admit that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah.

“The verbs in verse 18 would suggest persistent action over a period of time on the part of both Jesus and the Jews. The Jews *were seeking* the more to kill him, because he not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also he was calling God his own Father”

(Barton, V.W. **The Gospel of John: A Study Manual**. Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1965, page 38).

“As the Jews interpreted Jesus’ words, His claim was blasphemy and was punishable by death (Lev. 24:16). Later, the Sanhedrin would condemn Jesus to death for blasphemy (Mark 14:64)” (Howard, F.H. **Bible Book Study Commentary: John (Part 1)**. October, November, December, 1986, Nashville: Convention Press, page 65).

John 5: 19-24

Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

The great truth which Jesus wishes to be known is that in Jesus we see God. His identity with God is dependent on His doing what God wanted Him to do: He was completely obedient. It was an obedience based on love.

Barclay lists three functions which belong to Jesus Christ, as the Son of God.

- (1) He is the giver of life. We receive life when Jesus Christ enters into our life and we enter into Him. That is true in the earthly sense and for eternity.
- (2) He is the bringer of judgment. A man’s judgment depends on his reaction to Jesus.
- (3) Jesus is the receiver of honour. There is the unquenchable hope and unconquerable certainty that the crucified Christ will draw man to him. (Barclay, W. **The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John**. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956, pages 188-189).

Jesus says that to accept Him is life; and to reject Him is death.

“The Evangelist reveals to us a Christ who, on the one hand, can neither utter a word nor perform an act without the Father’s direction and enabling, and on the other, by virtue of that direction and enabling, performs the works of God, including the ultimate works of raising humanity for life in the perfected kingdom of God and for judgment. The polarities of the concept of Jesus as the Son of the Father are seen here with clarity: as the Son he owes his Father total obedience, but as the Son he is one with

the Father. The paradox runs through the Gospel and appears most starkly expressed in the utterances of 14:28 and 10:20: 'The Father is greater than I', and 'I and the Father are one'" (Beasley-Murray, G. R. **Word Biblical Commentary: John**, 2nd Edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000, page 79).

John 5: 31-40

If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.

You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony, but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

"Here Jesus stands opposed by the Jews, who demand witnesses to justify the claims of Jesus in his teaching. Jesus proceeds to call them, beginning with 'Another,' an unnamed person but one whose witness he know to be true (v 32). That 'Other' is God himself, who has provided the witnesses that follow: John the Baptist (33-35), the man sent from God for witness to the light (1:6-7); the works of Jesus, which the Father had given him to do (36); and the word of God, which the Father attests through the Scripture."

"The Scriptures were given by God to witness to the Christ, that his people might come to *him* and *through him* gain the life of which they give promise. To search the Scriptures and reject their testimony to Christ is to frustrate the purpose of God in giving them" (Beasley-Murray, pages 78-79).

The works of Jesus proceeded from the Father's command and aid and are revelations of the Father's will to save and the nature of his salvation. They are set above the testimony of John, but their purpose is frustrated entirely if they do not lead to the obedience of faith. They are to be compared with the revelation of God in the Scriptures: they, too, are given as witnesses in order to lead to Christ (Beasley-Murray, pages 80-81).

Consider the many signs and miracles which Jesus performed during his ministry. We have examined the changing of the water into wine and the healing of a paralyzed man.

Examine also John 4: 43-53; Luke 5: 12-14; Luke 8: 22-25; Luke 8: 42-28 for only a few of the many miracles.

Review the testimony of the Scripture foretelling the coming of the Messiah: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5; 42: 1-9; 53: 1-12; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9; Malachi 3; 1-5.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

To help the participants to be able to more clearly understand and express why they believe in Jesus.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

The Case for Jesus

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

John 5:1-24, 31-40

Background

John 4:43—5:47

Main Idea

Jesus as God's Son has the authority to offer life in its fullness.

Question to Explore

Why do you believe in Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to testify of why they believe in Jesus.

Connect with Life:

Ask the group to reflect on the question “Why do you believe in Jesus?” Would you be able to explain to another person why you believe?

Guide the Study:

Have someone read John 5: 1-4.

Set the scene for the lesson: Jesus was in Galilee, but went to Jerusalem for a feast. It is most likely the year 28 A.D. or the third year of Jesus’ public ministry. He went to a place called either Bethesda (house of mercy) or Bethsatha (house of the olive tree).

(Check the internet for pictures—journeythoughts.blogspot.com is one source).

Ask: Who gathered at the Pool? (the blind, lame and paralyzed).

From the Teacher Preparation materials describe what happened at the pool.

Have someone read John 5: 5-9a.

Ask someone to summarize what has happened in these verses.

Continue: Would someone share with us the reason why Jesus asked “Do you want to get well?”

Ask: Did the man express faith in Jesus? (No, as the passage reads there is no conversation about believing in Jesus).

Comment: There is no indication of why Jesus chose this particular man and apparently only this man. As in all of His miracles, the ultimate purpose is to reveal the glory of God. Jesus would have known that the Jewish leaders would have a negative reaction.

Have someone read John 5: 9b-13.

Request someone to describe the reaction of the Jewish leaders.

Ask: Was the man able to identify who healed him. What is the significant affirmation which he made? (“The man who made me well...”)

Assign the following passages to be read: Matthew 12: 6-11; Luke 6:9; Luke 13:14-17 and Luke 14:1-6.

Encourage a brief conversation with this: What does Jesus say about the Sabbath in these passages?

Ask: How important was it to the man that he take his mat with him? (It was probably one of his few possessions. Perhaps it was his only bed. Maybe, after spending most of his life lying on the mat, it was difficult for him to give it up.)

Now have the group consider the attitude of the man who was healed:

Was he trying to get Jesus in trouble?

Was he afraid that the Jewish leaders would punish him for breaking the Sabbath law?

Was he emotionally overwhelmed by all that had happened to him in a short time?

Pause for answers.

Follow with this brief discussion: Are there miraculous things that happen in our lives which we do not acknowledge and for which we do not express gratitude?

Have someone read John 5:14-15.

Say: The man later went to the temple. Perhaps he went to give thanks. He encountered Jesus there and Jesus told him **See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.**

Encourage the group to discuss how important it is for us to connect physical well-being and other gifts of God with spiritual considerations.

Ask: Is it possible for one to be healed from a major illness or escape uninjured from a car accident or not be harmed by a natural disaster and fail to acknowledge the hand of God in that happening? Can that happen to Christians?

Comment: The man did tell the Jewish leaders who healed him. We cannot know his motivation. He probably did not realize that they were determined, at this point, to find reasons to condemn Jesus. He didn't want them to blame him for breaking the Sabbath.

Have someone read John 5:16-18.

State: This incident led the Jews to increase their persecution of Jesus.

Present this question: What was Jesus' defense as stated in these verses? (**My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too. Am working.**)

Comment: This statement was a challenge to the Jewish leaders to acknowledge that God was Jesus' Father and He was equal with God.

Continue with this: How did they react to that challenge? (They tried all the harder to kill him.)

Have someone read 5:19-24.

Ask the group to consider the truths in this passage:

The Son does not act by Himself; He does what He see the Father doing.

The Father loves the Son and reveals to Him all he does.

The Son will bring eternal life.

The Son will judge.

In Jesus we see God.

Have someone read John 5:31-40.

State: This is like a court scene in which witnesses are called. There are three witnesses: John the Baptist; the works or miracles of Jesus and the Old Testament Scriptures or prophecies about the Messiah.

Ask: What was the testimony of John the Baptist? Have someone read Matthew 3: 11.

Have the group mention some of the miracles of Jesus. (There are 40 or more so don't spent too much time here).

Ask someone to read a powerful Scriptural prophecy about the coming of the Messiah in Isaiah 53: 1-12.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Offer this truth to the group: Jesus as God's Son has the authority to offer life in its fullness. We believe in Jesus because He is One with the Father. He offers salvation.

Have the following verse written on a white board or large piece of paper or on individual slips of paper to be given each participant.

Say the verse together to close the teaching session. (You make copies of the verse from the copy given at the end of the materials for the Worship Time).

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."
John 5: 24.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

The Case for Jesus **John 5:1-24, 31-40**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

All the World Is a Stage!!!

Dramatize the court scene given in John 5: 31-40.

The testimony of John the Baptist. Matthew 3: 11

The testimony of the works or miracles of Jesus. Choose any one of the miracles or more than one. You may use John 5: 29; John 5: 8-9; John 6: 8-14; John 9: 4-7 or any of your favorite miracles done by Jesus. Google "The Miracles of Jesus" for more references.

The testimony of the Scripture. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5; 42: 1-9; 53: 1-12; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9; Malachi 3; 1-5. Choose one or two as appropriate for your time frame.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Beginning the Service:

Sing:

You Are My All in All, *The Worship Hymnal* #143; CCLI #825356

Be Still and Know, *The Worship Hymnal* #457; CCLI #583265

If you have youth who have prepared a dramatization of the court scene of John 5: 31-40, ask them to present it at this time.

Offering:

Praying for the World:

Pray for the people of Thailand. Thailand is an emerging economy and considered a newly industrialized country. It is a popular tourist destination. The Andaman Sea is regarded as Thailand's most precious resource as it hosts the most popular and luxurious resorts in Asia. Despite the 2004 tsunami, they continue to be the playground of the rich and elite of Asia and the world. The country enjoys a high level of literacy. Thai people primarily follow Buddhism with a strong overlay of spirit worship, charms, omens, "luck," and idols, etc. Very few of them have a clear concept of the Creator God, much less an understanding of the work of Christ. Believers have worked in the country for more than a century and yet evangelical Christians still amount to less than 1 percent of the population. Pray that believers can share the Gospel in a culturally appropriate manner that presents the value of the Saviour and the claims of the kingdom on their lives.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Sabbath Rest

The term **Sabbath** means rest and first commemorated God's completion of His original creative acts in Genesis 2: 2-3 ***By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.***

In Deuteronomy 5:12-15 we read the command of the Lord to the Israelites ***Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do.***

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

These verses remind us of the privilege of the Sabbath. God tells the people through Moses to rest after six days of labour. Not only was the father of the house or the master of the house to rest, but the sons and daughters, the servants, the animals and the visitors were to rest as well.

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they were probably not allowed to rest. Their labour was all day – every day. That is the nature of slavery. God reminds them of their deliverance from slavery as he commands them to observe the Sabbath day. The idea of redemption – their redemption from Egypt – was to be a part of Sabbath observance.

Later Ezekiel wrote that the Sabbath was a covenant sign between God and Israel ***Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.***

Finally, the author of Hebrews indicated that the Sabbath was a symbol of the Promised Land, but it pointed to redemptive rest that would reach its fulfillment in the heavenly rest ***There remains then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest... Hebrews 4: 9-11a.*** (Howard, page 62).

It is interesting that something that was part of their freedom from bondage became another form of bondage for the Jewish people. The devotion to the Sabbath was not

freedom from labour as God intended, but slavish devotion to the keeping of a multitude of rules.

The particular rule which the Jews applied to the circumstance of the man healed by the pool of Bethzatha related to the prohibition of bearing burdens on the Sabbath. Its intention was the prohibition of trade and the protection of the servant who would most likely be the one who would be the burden-bearer of merchandise for trade. It had become a restriction so rigid that for a woman to wear a brooch on the Sabbath was a infringement of the rule. A man was sinning if he carried a needle in his robe on the Sabbath. They even argued as to whether he could wear his artificial teeth or his wooden leg. (See Barclay, page 178).

Christians through the ages became rigid in their observance of the Sabbath just as the Jews did. Children were not allowed to play games on the Sabbath; they were sit quietly and listen to Scripture read by their parents or to read it for themselves. Basic care of animals was permitted, but no work beyond that was allowed. Food preparation was done before the Sabbath as much as possible. The intention was to allow time for deep reflection and meditation. The result, however, was often a dull and unproductive experience for children if not for adults.

In the 21st century we seem to have gone to the other extreme and largely lost the purpose of the Sabbath as well as the restrictions for keeping it.

What is its purpose?

At the end of the six days of creation, God rested from that kind of work. His work of redemption and care continued. There was, however, a stop at the end of the creative work. The end of a school year; the completion of a building task; the finishing up of a project all bring satisfaction to us. Work that is repetitive- that is never done- wears one down. Many jobs are very repetitive. Housework is repetitive. The Sabbath serves as a “period” (a stop) to the week of work. That week’s work is over. There is a new and fresh beginning.

Contrast that to the busyness of modern day life. One day is very much like another to storekeepers, restaurant owners, sports teams and a multitude of other workers. Of course, they may have days off, but those may or may not coincide with the days off from school which their children have or the days off from work of their spouse.

In addition to the repetitive nature of work is the continuous activity of recreation. Competitive games for both children and adults fill every weekend. Sunday worship becomes the sacrifice that must be made if children are to be in music, sports, and many other activities.

Many people long for a day with no commitments – a Sabbath rest. They do not identify it as Sabbath rest, but God did. ***Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.***

The faithful Christian must learn to balance corporate worship and activity with Sabbath rest. When church commitments renew one, provide friendship and fellowship, connect us with the Creator and lead us to worship, they are a part of Sabbath rest. When they are tasks to be done, commitments to be kept in order not to offend God or lose face with others, then they fall outside the realm of Sabbath rest.

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath is a time for remembering. Just as the Israelites were to remember their deliverance from the bondage in Egypt, we are to remember our deliverance from sin and lostness in our own lives. God's mighty hand and outstretched arm reached each one of us at some point in our lives if we are believers. Sabbath rest causes us to remember that and to give thanks for it.

The Sabbath is a time for renewal of covenant and commitment. In earlier days in some cultures, most evangelical churches ended the sermon and worship time with a formal call to commitment. People were challenged to ask Jesus to come into their hearts in a salvation experience; Christians were challenged to a deeper commitment to Christ. These were often expressed publicly.

This may be less true today. Nonetheless, the Sabbath is a time for renewal of covenant and commitment. Ezekiel wrote that the Sabbath was a covenant sign between God and Israel ***Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.*** That was a long time ago. But it is relevant for us today. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between us and God. He will always keep covenant with us; we need to renew our commitment to him. We are to be a holy people because of our relationship to God as Father and as Saviour.

The author of Hebrews indicated that the Sabbath was a symbol of the Promised Land, but it pointed to redemptive rest that would reach its fulfillment in the heavenly rest. We began our experience of eternal life when we accepted Jesus as Saviour. We are on our way to heavenly rest. Each time of worship, each prayer, each time of shared fellowship with other believers, each act of service is both a part of the eternal life we are experiencing now and is preparation for the heavenly rest which awaits us.

Call to Commitment:

Sabbath rest is just a foretaste of heavenly rest.

Why would we deny ourselves the blessing of enjoying it? It is not a burden, but a gift of God to us.

Concluding the Service:

Sing: **Take Time to Be Holy**, *The Worship Hymnal* #587; CCLI #93748 Public Domain

Or read the last stanza of the hymn:

Take time to be holy,
Be calm in thy soul;
Each thought and each motive
Beneath His control;
Thus led by His Spirit
To fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted
For service above.

Make copies of the following verse to use in closing the Bible Study.

***I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”
John 5: 24.***

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