

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

7-30-25

John 5

The Pool At Bethesda – Verses 1-4

¹ Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. ² 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. ³ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

5:1 Three festivals required all Jewish males to come to Jerusalem: (1) the Festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread, (2) the Festival of Weeks (also called Pentecost), and (3) the Festival of Tabernacles.

5:2-4 A pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda: This pool has been excavated in the area just north of the temple area, and found to have five porches, just as John said.

Jesus Questions A Lame Man – Verses 5-6

⁵ One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ 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?”

5:6 After 38 years, this man’s problem had become a way of life. No one had ever helped him. He had no hope of ever being healed. The man’s situation looked hopeless. But no matter how trapped you feel in your infirmities, God can minister to your deepest needs. Don’t let a problem or hardship cause you to lose hope. God may have special work for you to do in spite of your condition, or even because of it. Many have ministered effectively to hurting people because they have triumphed over their own hurts.

The Man Replies And Jesus Heals Him – Verses 7-9

⁷ “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.”⁸ Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” ⁹ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

5:7 Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool: The crippled man assumed Jesus knew how things worked at the Pool of Bethesda, and he explained to Jesus why it wasn’t possible for him to be healed. Quite naturally, the man couldn’t think of any other way for his need to be met. The man was an interesting case of hope combined with hopelessness. He had hope, or would never have come to the Pool of Bethesda.

5:8-9 Immediately the man was made well: This happened as the man responded in faith and did exactly what Jesus told him to do, though a moment before this it was impossible to do it. The fact of his healing was confirmed in that he had the strength to carry his own bed-mat and walk with it.

The Jews Ignore The Miracle And Take Offense – Verses 10-13

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,¹⁰ and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”¹¹ But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”¹² So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”¹³ The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

5:10 According to the Pharisees, carrying a mat on the Sabbath was work and was therefore unlawful. It did not break an Old Testament law, but it broke the Pharisees’ interpretation of God’s command to “remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (Exodus 20:8). This was just one of hundreds of rules they had added to the Old Testament law.

5:10-13 A man who hadn’t walked for 38 years had been healed, but the Pharisees were more concerned about their petty rules than the life and health of a human being. The Jewish leaders saw both a mighty miracle of healing and a broken rule. They threw the miracle aside as they focused their attention on the broken rule, because the rule was more important to them than the miracle. It is easy to get so caught up in our man-made structures and rules that we forget the people involved. Are your guidelines for living God-made or man-made? Are they helping people, or have they become needless stumbling blocks?

Jesus Warns The Healed Man Of A Greater Danger – Verses 14-15

¹⁴ 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.”¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

5:14-15 This man had been lame, or paralyzed, and suddenly he could walk. This was a great miracle. But he needed an even greater miracle—to have his sins forgiven. The man was delighted to be physically healed, but he had to turn from his sins and seek God’s forgiveness to be spiritually healed. God’s forgiveness is the greatest gift you will ever receive. Don’t neglect his gracious offer.

The Authority of the Son – Verses 16-18

¹⁶ So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him.¹⁷ In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.”¹⁸ For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

5:16-17 If God stopped every kind of work on the Sabbath, nature would fall into chaos, and sin would overrun the world. Genesis 2:2 says that God rested on the seventh day, but this can’t mean that he stopped doing good. Jesus wanted to teach that when the opportunity to do good presents itself, it should not be ignored, even on the Sabbath.

5:18 Jesus was identifying himself with God, his Father. There could be no doubt as to his claim to be God. Jesus does not leave us the option to believe in God while ignoring God’s Son (5: 23). The Pharisees also called God their Father, but they realized Jesus was claiming a unique relationship with him. In response to Jesus’ claim, the Pharisees had two choices: to believe him, or to accuse him of blasphemy. They chose the second.

Jesus Explains His Relationship To The Father – Verses 19-23

¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, 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. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. ²¹ 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. ²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

5:19-23 Because of his unity with God, Jesus lived as God wanted him to live. Because of our identification with Jesus, we must honor him and live as he wants us to live. The question “What would Jesus do?” may help us make the right choices.

5:19-23 Whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner: Jesus explained that His work was a perfect reflection of the work and will of God the Father. Jesus showed us exactly what the work and will of God is. Some people think of a great difference — or even a small difference — between God the Father and God the Son, as if God the Father emphasized judgment and God the Son emphasized love. Sometimes they think the same way over what they call the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. This thinking is wrong; it usually comes from refusing to see the display of love in God the Father, or the display of righteousness in God the Son.

From Death To Life In The Son Of God – Verses 24-27

²⁴ “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

5: 24 Eternal life— living forever with God— begins when you accept Jesus Christ as Savior. At that moment, new life begins in you (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is a completed transaction. You still will face physical death, but when Christ returns again, your body will be resurrected to live forever (1 Corinthians 15).

5:25 In saying that the dead will hear his voice, Jesus was talking about the spiritually dead who hear, understand, and accept him. Those who accept Jesus, the Word, will have eternal life. Jesus was also talking about the physically dead. He raised several dead people while he was on earth, and at his second coming, “the dead in Christ” will rise to meet him (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

5:26 God is the source and Creator of life, for there is no life apart from God, here or hereafter. The life in us is a gift from him (see Deuteronomy 30:20; Psalm 36:9). Because Jesus is eternally existent with God, the Creator, he, too, is “the life” (14:6) through whom we may live eternally (see 1 John 5: 11).

5:27 The Old Testament mentioned three signs of the coming Messiah. In this chapter, John shows that Jesus has fulfilled all three signs. Authority to judge is given to him as the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14). The lame and sick are healed (Isaiah 35:6; Jeremiah 31:8-9). The dead are raised to life (Deuteronomy 32: 39; 1 Samuel 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7).

The Reality Of The Son's Coming Judgment – Verses 28-30

²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

5:28-30 Those who have rebelled against Christ will be resurrected, too, but they will hear God's judgment against them and will be sentenced to eternity apart from him. There are those who wish to live well on earth, ignore God, and then see death as final rest. Jesus does not allow unbelieving people to see death as the end of it all. There is a judgment to face.

Testimonies About Jesus – Verses 31-35

³¹ “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. ³² There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true. ³³ “You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴ Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵ John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

5:31-35 Jesus claimed to be equal with God (5:18), to give eternal life (5:24), to be the source of life (5:26), and to judge sin (5:27). These statements make it clear that Jesus was claiming to be divine—an almost unbelievable claim, but one that was supported by another witness, John the Baptist.

The Testimony Of The Works Of Jesus – Verses 36-40

³⁶ “I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸ nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. ³⁹ You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

5:36-40 The religious leaders knew what the Bible said but failed to apply its words to their lives. They knew the teachings of the Scriptures but failed to see the Messiah to whom the Scriptures pointed. They knew the rules but missed the Savior. Entrenched in their own religious system, they refused to let the Son of God change their lives. Don't become so involved in “religion” that you miss Christ.

The Reason For Their Unbelief & The Testimony Of Moses – Verses 41-47

⁴¹ “I do not accept glory from human beings, ⁴² but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. ⁴³ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. ⁴⁴ How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵ “But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶ If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. ⁴⁷ But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”

5:41 Whose praise do you seek? The religious leaders enjoyed great prestige in Israel, but their stamp of approval meant nothing to Jesus. He was concerned about God's approval. This is a good principle for us. If even the highest officials in the world approve of our actions and God does not, we should be concerned. But if God approves, even though others don't, we should be content.

5:45-47 The Pharisees prided themselves on being the true followers of their ancestor Moses. They were trying to follow every one of his laws to the letter, and they even added some of their own. Jesus' warning that Moses would accuse them stung them to fury. Moses wrote about Jesus (Genesis 3:15; Numbers 21:9; 24:17; Deuteronomy 18:15), yet the religious leaders refused to believe Jesus when he came.