



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

God's Ways Are Not Our Ways - Part 2 (John 5:10-18)

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A couple of years ago, my colleagues in the ministry and I attended a time of training and fellowship in Louisville, KY. I hitched a ride with a fellow state director from the east, along with some others, and we had a great time together that week.

On the return trip I sat in the back, enjoyed the conversation and paid no attention to the route we were taking. When we neared a bridge over a good-sized river, it got my attention because we shouldn't have a large river to cross. We were headed over the Ohio River when we should have been much further east. Our driver got off course way back in Charleston, WV when we had a choice of two interstate roads. He chose poorly...

Life is all about paths we choose. Some decisions bear little consequence on our life's direction (e.g., Italian or Mexican for lunch). Other paths take us, our families and others we influence into extreme danger or success. The way we go in life matters a great deal and Scripture is brimming with hints, principles and even commands to show us the best way to go.

In our last study, we saw that a poor paralytic wanted to be healed, but only knew of one way it could happen. Jesus came into his world and accomplished the healing in an unexpected way – God's best way. Now we can read and apply the rest of the story as we continue to follow the healed man, Jesus and the Jews who reacted to this miracle. Again we'll see that God's way is usually not the way man chooses.

I. LOVING EXHORTATION TO THE (FORMER) PARALYTIC

John 5:10-14 — So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk?'" But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

Somewhere along the way, we have exchanged honesty for tolerance. The result is that it is not fashionable to tell someone that they're doing something wrong. It's intolerant. It's judgmental. It's exclusivist. The problem with that way of thinking is, Jesus did it all the time.

IF ONE IS TRULY OPEN TO KNOWING CHRIST AND CAREFULLY READS HIS TEACHINGS AND ACTIONS IN THE GOSPELS, THEY WILL SEE HIS INTOLERANCE AND EXCLUSIVITY BY TODAY'S STANDARDS.

If tolerance is such a virtue, Jesus ignored it in this case. He healed the lame man in verse eight, but according to our text today, He got lost in the crowd. The former paralytic didn't know who healed him or where He was. When they again bump into each other in the temple, Jesus had an important message for the man.

"Don't live in sin" was the message. This tells us that the man's 38-year illness had been a result of sin and that his decisions in the future could result in even worse sickness. It also teaches us that Jesus, who is loving in all He does, is modeling the form love sometimes takes: truth-telling. We are expected to do the same:

Ephesians 4:14, 15 - As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ...

Proverbs 27:6 - Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

Those who care for others tell the truth. When Jesus said He was the only way to salvation¹, it was an exclusive statement but not unloving. When He told this healed man to stop sinning and repent, it was a loving command with the man's ultimate good in view. Since he had been healed, his sin that caused the illness was forgiven. His faith saved him, but his life from that point forward had to be lived in obedience to God as a proof he was spiritually saved.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: THURSDAYS AT 12:00PM, HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 153

Maryland

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II. LEGALISM EXPOSED BY JESUS

John 5:15-17 - The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

A man who hadn't walked in 38 years could suddenly pick up his bed and walk and some Jews were mad about it. He was healed on the wrong day in their mind and it was against their law for him to carry anything. The problem was they weren't referring to Old Testament law. They were confronting him (and Jesus) because their man-made laws had been broken.

The OT had forbidden work on the Sabbath but did not stipulate what "work" was specifically indicated (Exodus 20:8-11). The assumption in Scripture seems to be that "work" was one's customary employment, but rabbinical opinion had developed oral tradition beyond the OT that stipulated 39 activities forbidden (Mishnah *Shabbath* 7:2; 10:5), including carrying anything from one domain to another. Thus, the man had broken oral tradition, not OT law.²

God's law in the Old Testament had its purpose, but keeping the whole list could never save a person; it could only show how sinful man really is. Salvation has always been through faith. Christ came to give a better way than legalistic rule-keeping.

Philippians 3:9 - ... and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith...

Millions of people in our world today are trying to be "good enough" to be accepted by God. That is the way that seems best to them. The way of Christ is not based on that way of thinking. Faith alone in Him alone is the only way to know for sure that heaven is your destiny. Good works will never get us there because no one can be that good. He lived a perfect life and died in our place.

Jesus healed this man on purpose on this particular Sabbath day to make this point, knowing it would anger the Jews present. His statement in verse 17 claims equality with the Father, which would

make Him God. He is saying that the Father is continually working, so the Son is too, regardless of the rules men have set up.

A LEGALIST IS ANYONE WHO BEHAVES AS IF THEY CAN EARN GOD'S APPROVAL AND FORGIVENESS THROUGH PERSONAL PERFORMANCE.

C. J. MAHANEY

III. LOATHING EXHIBITED BY THE JEWS

John 5:18 - For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Here is a marked shift in the intent of the Jews. Before, they were threatened by the ministry of Jesus, who was gaining popularity and teaching contrary to their traditions. This angered them and led to attempts to discredit and persecute Him. But now the text says their hearts were actually moved to thoughts and plans of murder. The human heart is capable of heinous things in the name of religion.

What can we learn from the Lord here? We are also called to speak truth to the world around us regardless of the consequences we may suffer from people who are hostile to the message.

1 Peter 2:21 - For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps...

Let me encourage you to take those opportunities to point others to the Word of God, even if it means embarrassment, rejection or outright persecution. Those are small prices to pay for the One who has experienced all that and more.

Luke 9:26 - For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

¹ John 14:6

² John MacArthur, notes on John 5:10-11 from the *MacArthur Online Study Bible* (www.esvonline.org/search/john+5)