

Enter His Rest

John 5:1-18

- I. Intro: John 5 in Thessaloniki
- II. *[1] After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*
 - A. Religious people do the things they are “required” to do and then feel as though their job is done
- III. *[2] Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. [3] In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. [5] One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.*
 - A. A sea of people. Hurting, broken people. From a distance they’re just numbers, nameless ghosts (life vests, illegal shanty houses)
 - B. When you enter into any one person’s life they become human. Every person has a story, a past, a hope, a wound
 - C. But survival demands dehumanization, or so it seems. 8000 people a day need to eat, be processed
 - D. Is anyone listening? Is anyone seeing? Does anyone truly care?
- IV. *[6] When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” [7] The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” [8] Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” [9] And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.*
 - A. Jesus saw him, just as he sees each one of us
 - B. Though you feel overlooked and forgotten, and maybe are by me, the church, the world... Jesus sees you. You are not a number, not a part of the crowd.
 - C. Jesus cares for this man. He wants him to be made well.
 - D. I told the refugees in Thessaloniki that Jesus sees them in their pain, in their wounds, in their suffering. The truth is:
 - E. The government doesn’t see them
 - F. The Greeks don’t see them
 - G. The global church doesn’t see them
 - H. Their parents don’t see them
 - I. Jesus sees them, and he cares. He is pursuing them, drawing them, calling them to himself. He has moved them to where they are so that they can hear the gospel - if someone will share it.
 - J. In the midst of the wounds and the pain, Jesus can and wants to heal. Just like this man.
- V. *Now that day was the Sabbath. [10] So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.” [11] But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” [12] They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’” [13]*

Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. [14] Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." [15] The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

- A. Jews weren't supposed to work on the Sabbath. They were so afraid of breaking this that they made up rules on top of rules in order to ensure it didn't happen
- B. Some examples:
 - 1. Looking in a mirror was forbidden. The rationale was that if you looked into the mirror on the Sabbath day and you saw a gray hair, you might be tempted to pull it out and thus perform work.
 - 2. You also could not wear your false teeth because if they fell out, you would have to pick them up and you would thus work.
 - 3. You could not carry a handkerchief on the Sabbath, but you could wear one. That meant if you were upstairs and wanted to take a handkerchief downstairs, you would have to tie it around your neck, walk downstairs, and untie it.
 - 4. The religious legalistic Jews even debated about a man with a wooden leg. Namely, if his home caught on fire, could he carry his wooden leg out of the house on the Sabbath?
- C. They were so zealous for their rules that they didn't care for people.
- D. Ever met someone like that? Ever met someone who would rather see a person suffer and die, be crippled for life than see their tower of cards collapse?
- E. I've just spent two weeks looking at a sea of pain, and realized that Christians are approaching the problem politically when they should be approaching it theologically.
- F. Does God move nations around? Is the heart of a king like channels of water in a God's hands or isn't it? Does he reign over the flood of waters and people or doesn't he? Is he shocked? Is he surprised? Has he not always used terrifyingly devastating abhorrent things to eventually accomplish good or hasn't he?
- G. The Pharisees love their rules more than they love God or people.
 - 1. They don't care about this man's healing. They care that it happened on the sabbath. No joy. No grace. No love. Rules. Ritual. Law.
 - 2. No seeing the image of God. No rejoicing over life. Judgment. Tribunal. Hammer.
- H. I wonder how many of us would react to the a sea of refugees or migrants on our own shores. People desperate for healing and RIPE for the gospel (and indeed ripe they are)
 - 1. Would we react like Pharisees or like Jesus?
- I. Well the institution smashes the hope and joy of this man - strong-arming him into betraying Jesus.
 - 1. I wonder how differently he would have viewed the Son of God if they had celebrated rather than condemned

2. The institution, essentially, slashed the brand new tires of potential faith, smothered the seed of faith with gasoline and lit a match

VI. *[16] And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. [17] But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." [18] This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

- A. They hated Jesus because he worked on the Sabbath, but they wanted to kill him b/c he called God Father
- B. Well, what is the Sabbath all about? Rest. Rest from work. The legalists had missed the whole point of the Sabbath.
- C. In Genesis 2, after God created the earth in six days he rests. During the first six days we keep seeing: "And there was evening and there was morning, and it was the X day," But there is no mention of evening and morning on the seventh day.
- D. God entered into his Sabbath-rest, and he is still in that rest, even while he is upholding the earth by his power. He works, and he remains in his Sabbath-rest.
- E. Later when God gave the Law at Sinai, the Ten Commandments and what follows, he instituted the Sabbath as a reflection of his Sabbath-rest.
 1. The Sabbath's purpose was to be a blessing to God's people. It was good for them to rest, and more importantly it also foreshadowed the Sabbath-rest that awaited them (found in Jesus).
- F. Throughout history, mankind has worked tirelessly. Worked for food, shelter, love, through pain and suffering. Worked to be at peace w/ God. Worked and failed.
 1. But the Sabbath - that day of rest was designed to be a joy, a time to rest from your work and focus on God and his goodness. It looked forward to something else... someone else.
 2. Jesus came and worked. Specifically, he fulfilled the law - living the life you can't live, dying the death you deserve to die, rising from tomb.
 3. **Jesus did the 'work of obeying the Law' so that you could rest from trying to prove yourself to God and, instead, enter freely into God's Sabbath rest.**
 4. *Hebrews 4:9-10, [9] So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.*
 5. God has ceased from his works, and so do we.
 - a) Jesus said, "It is finished..."
 6. God has rested in what Christ did, and so do we.
 - a) It is paid in full, atonement, propitiation has been made!
 7. We don't follow rules to be at peace and rest with God. We rest in the finished work of Jesus. If you are in Christ, you have entered the Sabbath-rest.

a) *Colossians 2:16-17, Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

8. There is no longer any need to observe the Old Testament Sabbath. That need was removed when Christ died on the cross.

G. **Jesus did the work of obeying the law so that you could enter into his rest.**

The result of Jesus' rest is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and on and on.

H. **The alternative is to create lists and give lists and keep trying to do the work of earning God's grace (gift). The wages, the result, of that? Death.**

And in the immediate, a joyless, bitter, condescending life.

I. To the self-righteous, the gospel is, "For God so loved the world that he gave a list, that whosoever might do the things on the list might have eternal life."

J. In this story, Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath. Spiritually, this reveals that he, as God, can give us spiritual healing so that we can enter into God's rest.

Religious people, however, reject what Jesus has to offer. They prefer doing it on their own. They want rules, not grace. They want lists, not mercy. They reject Jesus, and - in so doing - reject God.

VII. Conclusion

A. Story from Moria, "I just want to rest. I am tired of traveling."

1. It is found in Jesus.

B. There are a sea of people out there who need rest found only in Jesus. Don't dehumanize them.

C. How about you? Do you want rest? Everyone wants rest from something. Do you want justification before God? Do you want freedom and joy? Or do you want a list?

D. You can find rest in Jesus.

E. He is a gracious redeemer.