John 5:1-18

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Preacher: Rev. Chris Ley

[0:00] Let's pray as we stand. Father, I pray as we read your word, hear your word, we would see your word.

! We would see that Jesus comes full of grace and truth.! I pray this in his name and for his glory. Amen. You can be seated.
And we all just affirm that we believe in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. And the Catholic means global, universal, the church around the world.
And this is something we are thankful for. And we are thankful that we have gained this morning some brothers and sisters we've never met yet. We are so grateful you have been with us. And you have blessed us.
And you've been a powerful witness of how God saves and how God blesses. So thank you. Thank you for coming all this way. We are humbled and blessed by you. It would be helpful to open your Bible in front of you to John chapter 5.
[1:05] That's on page 890 of the black or blue Bible in front of you. If you've memorized the chapter, you don't need to open your Bible. As you do that, I also noticed in our bulletin, I'm a little flattered by this and a little terrified.

There's two pages on the back of your bulletin for a sermon note. Jordan, they only give you one page. So, I was chatting to the person who made this and she said, I nearly got three this morning. So, the final exam will be next week. So, take good notes. We're looking at the Gospel of John. This is an eyewitness biography of the life of Jesus from his closest earthly friend.
These are precious words. At the beginning of John's Gospel in chapter 1, we read that grace and truth come through Jesus Christ. And in our text today, John shows us how.
So, whoever you are, whatever you believe, wherever you come from, this morning, through God's Word, grace and truth are offered to you. Those are the two points for the sermon.
[2:23] So, first, let's look at how Jesus comes full of grace. This is verse 1 of John chapter 5. It reads, After this, there was a feast to the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now, there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five-roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed people.
One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years. So, the setting of our story is a national religious holiday, not unlike Thanksgiving in Canada today.
And many people are journeying up to Jerusalem, to the temple, to worship God. And Jesus, we're told, is one of them. And Jesus enters the city through the gate that's used to bring the sheep to the temple to be sacrificed.
And we read, upon entering Jerusalem, there is a multitude, a huge crowd of invalids, who are gathered around a large Roman bath. Now, there's five-roofed colonnades that surround these two baths.
[3:30] It was probably bigger, much bigger than this room. Hundreds of people, thousands maybe, who are unwell. The word for invalid here literally means one who has no strength.

People who are physically weak, who suffer from chronic physical disease, or disability. And we're told Jesus goes to them. Lots of people, multitude.
There's so much illness and suffering and sorrow, you wouldn't have any idea where to even start. Jesus enters, and he sees a man who is paralyzed.
A man who has been paralyzed for 38 years. And we're told in the text, Jesus saw this paralyzed man, and he knew that he had already been there a long time.
Jesus sees, and Jesus knows. He sees the man, and he knows everything about him. His life, and his suffering.

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[4:38] It's true of us as well. Jesus sees you this morning. He knows your suffering. He knows how long you have suffered, even if nobody else does.

Jesus sees this man, he knows everything about him, and now we will see he has the power to heal him. Jesus asks the man, he invites the man to receive healing in verse 6.
He says, Do you want to be healed? The man doesn't answer Jesus' question. He has no idea who Jesus is. And he assumes Jesus is speaking about, you know, helping him get into the pool, which he believes has magical powers.
So look at verse 7. The paralyzed man answers Jesus, Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. And while I'm going, another person steps in before me.
So there's apparently a superstition surrounding these waters that when they start bubbling, probably from a spring underneath them, that they have magical healing properties, but only for the first person who enters the pool.
[5:43] This man is paralyzed. He can't walk. So he has no way to get into the water when it starts bubbling, and so everyone else barges in front of him. It's hopeless.

It's totally alone. No one to help. Chronically suffering. Until verse 8. Jesus says to him, Get up. Take up your bed. And walk. And at once we're told the man was healed. He took up his bed. And he walked. Now I mentioned earlier, the pools where this happened were called in Aramaic Bethesda.
That's a detail we're given. Bethesda literally means house of grace. So in this house of grace, the God of grace grips this man through the word of God.
And his life is never the same. He's healed. He takes up his bed, and he walks. It's a simple point. Jesus comes full of grace.
[6:50] He reveals that he's like God. He speaks, and creation obeys. From John 1, he is the word. In him is life.

And disease and death are destroyed at his voice. Now question for you. What has the paralyzed man done so far to deserve God's grace?
This is where the rubber hits the road for us. How can I become like this guy? The man's done absolutely nothing. This man didn't ask to be healed.
He didn't seek Jesus. He didn't believe in Jesus. He didn't have any idea who Jesus was. This man didn't display any righteousness or even faith.
He believed in a magic pool, but not in Jesus when he was asked if he wanted to be healed. And once healed, most shockingly, the man didn't even bother to thank Jesus or even ask for his name.
[7:58] He's so seemingly self-focused on his own healing that he didn't think to seek after Jesus like Jesus had sought after him. Even worse, after the healing, in verse 14, we read that again Jesus is searching for this man.

Should be the other way around. And Jesus finds him in the temple. And after Jesus finds him again, he reminds him of the grace he's received, saying, Look, you're well.
Well, what does the man do? Right away, in verse 15, he goes and he tells the religious leaders that it was Jesus who healed him. He tells on Jesus. He rats him out.
He turns him in, knowing that Jesus is now going to get in trouble. The man in this story does everything wrong. The only thing he does right is he obeys Jesus in taking up his bed and walking.
And yet, we're told, Jesus sought him twice. Jesus saw him. He knew him. He healed him. The man did absolutely nothing to deserve it or earn it or even appreciate it.
[9:17] It was all grace. Completely undeserved gift from God given through the word of God through Jesus who is full of grace.

This is our story this morning, too. If you know Jesus this morning, you know him because he sought you out and because he knows you.
God has spoken life into you through his word. We are gripped by God's grace, not the other way around. God's mercy to all of us is undeserved and often unappreciated.
I mean, it's Thanksgiving Sunday for goodness sakes. Today of all days, we should be worshiping God for the grace that he has lavished upon us, giving thanks for the great benefits we've received at his hands.
If you do not know Jesus this morning, perhaps through God's word, he is seeking you out right now. If you do not know Jesus, he knows you.

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[10:30] He knows everything about you. He knows your suffering. He knows your weakness. He knows your mistakes. And he seeks you this morning to give you grace.

Jesus comes full of grace. Our second point, so now you're on page two of your sermon notes, is that Jesus comes full of truth.
First grace, now truth. This healing gets Jesus into trouble, doesn't it? Look at the end of verse 9. Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who'd been healed, it's the Sabbath. It's not lawful for you to take up your bed. In the Old Testament, God commands his people to obey the Sabbath, to stop working for 24 hours once a week.
To obey the Sabbath is one of the central markers that you are a member of God's people. It's one of the Ten Commandments. And in the Ten Commandments, in the Old Testament, God gives us two reasons for why we ought to obey the Sabbath.
[11:45] God's people are supposed to stop working to remember God's two great acts of grace, creation and salvation. In Exodus 20, the first time the Ten Commandments come up on the mountain, God tells his people the reason for keeping the Sabbath is to remember that God created the heavens and the earth.

So God's people are supposed to stop working on the seventh day of the week to remember God's grace in creation, to remember God brings life, to remember that it's not our lives are not dependent upon ourself or our own work or our own effort or our own paycheck, but rather life is a gift of grace from God.
That's the first reason they're supposed to remember the Sabbath. Remember creation. God gave you life. The second reason for Sabbath keeping is given in Deuteronomy 5. And here, the reason you're supposed to keep the Sabbath is to remember that God saved his people.
God's people are called to remember God brought them out of slavery with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Again, it's an act of grace, of saving his people, of delivering them from death, of preserving their life.
So these are the two reasons God's people are supposed to keep the Sabbath, to remember God's grace in creation and to remember God's grace in salvation. Sounds like a pretty good idea, doesn't it?
[13:17] Maybe God knew what he was talking about in telling us to take a day a week to do this. But the Jewish authorities of Jesus' day have made the Sabbath not about remembering God and his grace, but about petty, pedantic rules and legalism surrounding what is work and what is not.

Their focus is no longer on God, not on his grace in creation and salvation, but rather in obeying their rules. And this is why they see a paralyzed man healed and their first reaction is to get mad at him for carrying his mat.
It's ridiculous. The healed man answers them in verse 11. The man who healed me, that man said to me, take up your bed and walk.
Sounds like Adam and Eve in the garden, blaming others. Verse 12. They asked him, who is the man who said to you, take up your bed and walk? Now the man who'd been healed didn't know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn and there was a crowd in the place.
I want you to notice that Jesus explicitly tells the man to pick up his bed in verse 8, knowing it's the Sabbath. Jesus didn't need to do this.
[14:37] He could have just said, get up, or be healed. But he intentionally includes this command to pick up the man's mat, knowing that it would start a controversy. So why would Jesus do this?

Why would he intentionally upset the Jewish leaders? And the reason Jesus invites the conflict is because he creates now an opportunity for him to reveal truth.
He wants us to know the truth. And so he initiates this debate so that he can bring us now both grace and truth.
Verse 14. After the healing, Jesus finds the man in the temple. Jesus first sought the man to give him God's grace, but now he seeks him again to give him God's truth. If Jesus only cared about himself, he would have kept to himself.
But he's come for the world to give himself to serve and to save. So he finds the man in the temple and he says to him, see, you are well. Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.
[15:41] Jesus brings him grace and truth. The grace is what Jesus says right at the beginning. See, you are well. Look, I healed you.

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Even though you've done nothing to deserve it. It's grace. And then he speaks truth. Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.
This is a very strange thing for Jesus to say. At first glance, it looks like a threat, as if Jesus is saying, watch it, because if you sin, something worse than paralysis is going to happen to you.
It sounds like Jesus is connecting someone's physical well-being with their righteousness. It sounds like Jesus is saying, if you sin, you will suffer physically.
This is not what Jesus is saying. We know it's not what he's saying because of the story that happens in John chapter 9. If you just flip your Bible a couple pages.
[16:47] There, Jesus' disciples see a blind man. And they ask Jesus in verse 1, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? And Jesus answers, it's not this man that sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Jesus dismisses any idea that God punishes our sin with physical illness. And so should we. God chose this, Jesus chose this man to be healed to show us that his grace is not dependent on our goodness or our worthiness to receive it.
Christians suffer from physical disabilities and disease just like everyone else. A physical disability does not represent some chronic sin or a lack of faith in the person or their family who suffers it.
So what does Jesus mean when he says, sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you? I'll tell you in a few minutes. Let's read on.
Jesus finds the man and he speaks grace and truth and then we're told in verse 15, the man went away and he told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this is why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.
[18:07] See, Jesus doesn't avoid the controversy about the Sabbath, he initiates it because he wants to reveal a truth now that no one else knows. This truth, Jesus has come from heaven to earth to share.

It's a truth that has the power to transform your life and to transform our world. It's the truth that leads to Jesus being killed. Here it is.
Verse 17. My father is working until now and I am working. Look at the response in verse 18.
This is why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him. Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was now even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God.
The healing of the man is an act of undeserved grace done by Jesus to make an emphatic point.
And the point is this. I am God's son. That's the truth of this passage.
[19:14] That's the point. People take this passage and they suggest it's about how any illness can be healed if a sick person has enough faith.

I hope now you can all see that that is actually the exact opposite of what the Bible is teaching us here. The man who is healed doesn't deserve the healing.
He receives it because God is full of grace and goodness. And the channel for God's grace and God's power to give life and to save is Jesus who is God's son.
That's the truth of the passage. And it's scandalous. Saying God is my father is enough to get Jesus killed. This is why Jesus is killed.
And so now Jesus goes on for the rest of the chapter to expound upon this statement. One commentator I read this week said Jesus' sermon in chapter 5 is the deepest teaching Jesus gives in John's gospel.
[20:19] Wow. That's a statement. In this passage Jesus explains to us he lifts the veil so we can see the relationship he has with the Father.

A relationship that is defined by absolute perfect unity and obedience and love. So just look at a few of the verses. Verse 19 Jesus says the son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the father doing.
Whatever the son the father does the son does likewise. Jesus tells us he's totally dependent on the father. He looks to the father in all things and he will do what the father is doing.
Verse 20 the father loves the son and he shows him all that he himself is doing. The father loves the son so much he hides nothing from him. This is perfect love and knowledge that exists between them.
Jesus is revealing he has perfect unity with God the father. Verse 21 Jesus goes on he makes even more outrageous claim. The father raises the dead and gives them life and so also the son gives life to whom he will.

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[21:38] Jesus claims here that he shares God's power over life. In him is life. all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that has been made.

So God's power to give life creation the very thing God's people are meant to be remembering on the Sabbath. Jesus here claims that the father has shared this life giving power with his son.
And now critically in verse 22 for the father judges no one but has given all judgment to the son 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. Jesus claims the father has given him all judgment and he now tells us his judgment in verse 24.
Truly truly I say to you that's the Greek way of saying underline this this is important listen up whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life.
[22:52] They do not come into judgment but have passed from death to life. So Jesus shares with us in this sermon that he that he shares God's power over life and he also shares God's power to save.

Creation salvation. The very things the Sabbath are intended to point us to God's grace in creation and in salvation and giving life and saving life point us now to God's son to Jesus.
In this way Jesus fulfills the Sabbath. In this way Jesus is now Lord over the Sabbath. He's the son of God. He shares in God's work and creation and salvation and giving life and saving life.
He's the judge and whoever hears his words and believes in his father has eternal life. They pass from death to life. In Jesus we perfectly see God's grace in giving life and saving life which is what the Sabbath was intended to reveal.
No one has ever said anything like this before. This is a truth the world has never known. And Jesus uses the healing on the Sabbath to reveal this truth.
[24:16] He has come to give grace to the undeserving to save the world and he also comes to bring us truth. He's the son of God equal with the father.

He's been made the judge over all and in the father's name with the father's blessing. And so your response to Jesus is the same as your response to his father.
We can now go back to that problematic verse and understand what Jesus meant when he said to the healed man, go and sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you. Notice, Jesus first affirms that the man has sinned.
Go and sin no more. This truth's hard to hear.! But rather he now invites him into life.
Go and sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you. What could possibly be worse than being paralyzed in ancient Jerusalem for 38 years?
[25:49] Or what's worse is standing before the son of God, the judge of the world, the source of all life and light, and being told, I never knew you, get away from me.

Jesus is warning this man that a judgment is coming for those who do not honor him, who do not believe in him, who reject his words.
Jesus didn't come to condemn the world. His message to the healed man and to you this morning is not one of condemnation, but of salvation. Hear my words, believe in me, receive the grace I freely give, and you have passed from death to life.
You shall not be judged by me. You shall have eternal life. Jesus comes to offer grace and truth.
The truth is that all of us are sinners, and so all of us stand before God guilty of evil and deserving judgment.
But the grace is that in Christ you can be forgiven. Jesus is God's son. He has the power to give life and to save. If you hear his word and believe in him who sent Jesus, you have eternal life.
[27:07] Jesus has received the judgment and the penalty all of us deserve, so that through grace we now receive eternal life. He is full of grace and truth.

And to all who do receive him, who believe in his name, he gives the right to become children of God. This grace is offered to you today, right now.
Do you want to be saved? Do you want to be healed of your sin? Do you want to experience eternal life with God the Father and his Son through his Spirit?
Hear his words and believe. Jesus comes to you now, full of grace, and truth. Thanks be to God. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

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