

# 9/20/20 - John 5:1-17 - "Jesus is Lord over all"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please join me in a word of prayer as we begin. Father God, we are grateful to be gathered. We are grateful to have this word, the bread of life, that it's perfect for teaching, rebuking, correcting, encouragement.

Father, all of our lives flow out from this word. Who we are as you have defined us to be is found in this word. Our obedience to you is found in this word.

We ought not to look anywhere else. Father, help us at this time as we look in your word. And we ask the Holy Spirit to speak to us through your word today. We pray that the words on these pages that the Spirit has inspired.

We pray for the meaning of that to come out to us today. To speak to us, to encourage us, and to correct us if needed. We praise all in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to be splitting this text up into two different sections.

In this passage in John. The first section is going to be observing verses 1 through 9.

[ 1 : 09 ] And then the second section talking about verses 10 through 17. Let's look with me in the first section, which is titled, Jesus, Lord over sickness.

Look with me at verse 1. After this, there was a feast of 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, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

The passage begins today from there. After this. You might ask yourself, okay, if you haven't seen, if you haven't been in tune with the series thus far, what exactly is this after?

[ 2 : 16 ] Let's look at that. Just look at the passage right before. Where we see the official's son. And what we have is a desperate parent going out, traveling a long distance to find Jesus because he knows that he can heal his son.

This official wanting to take his son back to the boy, thinking that Jesus had to be present there in order for his son to be healed. And being stuck on this human construct of logic. It actually posed, resounded very little flattery of mankind because mankind has a tendency of having to see signs and wonders in order to have a visual verification in order to believe.

And so this official was actually rebuked in everyone around him. Where he says in verse 48 of chapter 4, see Jesus said to him, after he's trying to drag him back to his son, unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.

There's a problem with the people gathering. It looked more like a circus, like Jesus was the main event attraction in this time, that they wanted to see signs and wonders. This man solely came because he exhausted all of his other resources, being an official.

It speaks a little flattery of mankind's constant need of visual verification of signs and wonders to believe. And Jesus rebukes them all who depend on signs and wonders to believe. And so as the context of John's inspired word unravels to us, I want us to see the great beauty that he's actually highlighting in this passage.

[ 3 : 51 ] Often we can be big Bible reading fans and go through all these plans, which say, read the Bible in 90 days, read the Bible in a year.

And the things that fall short in these Bible reading plans is that it's focused on the quantity of that reading, not the quality necessarily of that reading. And what we have here is something that if you're just zipping through the gospel of John, you'll miss something vital that he's using in his literary writing.

And I want us to see that here today. Jesus continued his journey. And John uses a very interesting technique of providing a contextual emphasis on things that matter.

We see him sort of expanding, creating like an expansive record of something large, of vastness. And then he's zeroing in to something precise.

Look at this. He goes up to Jerusalem, this vast city. And now at this vast city, he goes to a specific location, the Pool of Bethesda.

[ 4 : 57 ] And at that Pool of Bethesda, there was a vast multitude of invalids, of people who are handicapped, of all sort of diseases. But he focuses in on one man who also has a vast history of being sick.

If you read too quickly, you miss those types of things. John is sort of, I honestly think that he's sort of priming us just as we prime the lawnmower. He's just trying to help us to see something that he's trying to communicate in this passage, specifically about God's love and his precision upon his mission on earth.

And Bethesda, it is common for invalids to gather at this pool. And some ancient records tell that this pool contained certain minerals that were thought to provide medicinal aid for them.

And we see something here that's very interesting to know that this pool was known to occasionally bring forth hot springs of water. So soothing, so if anybody has arthritis in here or early signs of arthritis, you know that there's certain things that you can do to soothe that arthritis.

Essentially, this pool would stir up some water, some warm water, and also known to have the minerals to ease those joint pains as well.

[ 6 : 25 ] I'd compare it to a giant Epsom salt bath. So individuals, all invalids, various handicaps would gather around this pool in hopes to find some type of relief from their conditions.

So, as John's priming our hearts, literary speaking, and also seeing that this pool provides temporary relief that doesn't always come, we see something here.

He's priming us. These contrasts are important to observe in his writings. And we see Jesus enter the scene on verse 6. Look with me. 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?

Jesus comes to this handicapped man who's been suffering from a condition that he divinely knows about for 38 years. And he asked this man, which would probably be a no-brainer for us, do you want to be healed?

Isn't it interesting at times, Jesus might have to ask us those same questions in life where we've become so used to dealing with pain, dealing with suffering, dealing with depression and anxiety and things like that, that that question might seem bizarre, but it's not too far from home in our own lives.

[ 7 : 59 ] Or if Jesus were to come and say, do you want to be healed? Often we stagger at that. Like, yeah, maybe a day off would help. I'm not talking about that. Look with me how it appears that this man was actually struggling from that same apathy.

This sick man in verse 7 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 stepped down before me.

Look at his response here, church. This is very important in this passage. How about coming from a man handicapped from his perspective of 38 years?

There was no, not one desire to be made well. He just wanted temporary relief. He just wanted to feel better so that his life on this earth could be less difficult in getting around.

And the solution of being made well in this passage is through physical matter, logical thoughts, and the status quo, that being relief from water in this passage.

[ 9 : 08 ] Similar to the Samaritan woman, looking back, who looked to water, thinking that water could, was the thing that could quench her thirst.

But Jesus was talking about something completely different. This man was also looking for water for simply relief. And then in the passage, Jesus speaks.

In verse 8, Jesus said to him, get up, take up your bed, and walk. And at once the man was healed, and he looked up, he took up his bed, and walked.

I believe that we do need to feel the weight of this passage. Sometimes in such a distant text from our current day and age.

I want you to feel the weight of Jesus Christ's words. The Son of God, fully divine, traveling to this one location, despite its vastness.

[10:12] Visiting this one man among the multitude. You see, man's plan often wants just temporary relief from situations, but God's plan often reveals, I'd rather heal.

Man's plan wants a treatment plan. God's plans say, I want a cure. In the same way that God spoke the world into being at creation in Genesis 1-3, Jesus spoke words that had the power to cure. There was not an ounce of debate that Jesus is Lord over sickness. And John, through the inspired word of the Holy Spirit, is trying to communicate that to us today.

Verse 9 says, At once, there was not a moment of hesitation. This 38-year-suffering man was without hope, without a cure, and at once was healed after he had up and taken his bed and walked.

Church, as the word of God has been priming our hearts through the vastness and precision, we really need to pay attention to that at this point.

[11:25] because did this handicapped man, was he thankful according to this word? No.

Was he, did he have any faith at all to receive such a miracle? No. Did he deserve any of this? Did he deserve to be healed?

No. Which brings a great point out of this passage. The great love of God is without a doubt one who seeks and finds those who are far from him.

It is one that lavishes his grace upon us regardless of our merit and regardless of our apathy at times. Church, this is the gospel.

Think back to the message of John 3, 16, for a minute. Think of the terms of the structure John reveals to us in this passage today of that vastness and yet precise love of God.

[12:30] Think of the vastness. Remember, we spoke about this a couple of months ago. Think about the vastness of the universe. 200 billion galaxies in the universe and God chose one galaxy to focus on.

Think about the vastness of that one galaxy which contains another 200 billion suns with solar systems.

God focuses upon the one solar system. Thinking about the vastness of that solar system, 93 million miles in length, God chooses one planet.

and in the vastness of that one planet, God looks upon one continent. In the vastness of that one continent, God looks down upon this region in the Middle East and in the vastness of that region of the Middle East, God looks upon one city in Jerusalem and upon that vastness of that city, Jerusalem, he looks upon this pool, Bethesda, and among this pool, in Bethesda, Bethesda, God looks upon one man and upon the vastness of even this one man in all his complexity of being a human being, DNA strands and codes, he looks upon one sickness, one condition.

Church, do you not marvel at the grace of God at times? That through faith in Jesus Christ, God doesn't simply just stand back, sit on his rocker up in the sky and release a couple good things here and there down to us good human beings.

[14:14] No, we don't deserve any of it. But still, God doesn't stand back of a distance, he comes and provides these interventions in our lives at various times.

And Jesus is truly Lord over sickness. His greatest act of healing we can ever experience may not actually be in this life, but it will be in the next life, eternal life with him.

These signs and wonders reveal who Jesus is, his divinity, his purpose of coming to this earth. He is no therapist to help lower this man into the water.

He wants to raise people up from the grave. He's no family doctor to make a referral to someone else who can help with that heart condition. He is the surgeon who exchanges exchanges and gives you a new heart.

This is the glory of God. Behold it, church. He is Lord not only over sickness, but over all. And it's important knowing that Jesus is Lord over sickness.

[15:18] We experience sickness in this life. This doesn't mean that we all ought to be well then. I know a lot of people who love the Lord who passed away from cancer, who had terminal conditions, who had various diagnoses that really did not provide much hope in their life.

But knowing that Jesus Christ is Lord over sickness and he's choosing not to heal you, that can actually bring you confidence and trusting in him because his will is working on a thousand different things in our lives in the midst of that sickness that we don't see going on.

But as life is a vapor, this is not our permanent home. We know that sickness never wins in the end. Amen? Truly, this text gives a significant viewpoint of God's vast and precise grace.

However, there is still more. And actually, the more we read, the more we might become confused. And for good reason, too. Jesus just healed this man.

Despite the grace of that miracle, it actually is not the point of this passage the least bit. It's important to note, but it's not the main point. We must continue because this narrative does continue and see how this story continues to develop to bring us into, bring this into context to see what the Holy Spirit inspired this message to communicate.

[16:50] We hear a daunting sort of a storm cloud, the thunders rolling, and a big boom when you hear these words in verse 9.

Now that day was the Sabbath. You can hear that thunder rumbling. As the storm clouds are starting to roll in, this great miracle is followed by an ominous signal.

Truly, trouble was coming. Let's look at section 2. Jesus Lord over the Sabbath.

Starting in verse 10. It says, so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, it is a Sabbath and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.

Let's stop there for a minute because according to Exodus 20, verse 8 through 11, the Sabbath, the last day of the week, was to be a day without work.

[17:59] And now, although Genesis 2, verse 2 through 3 teaches us that God rested on the seventh day of creation as a model for us to follow, God actually never rests at all because he cannot grow weary.

He has nothing to rest from. He is sufficient. He is ever-present. He is not to be looked at as a human in any sense of that characteristic.

Meaning, the one who created the Sabbath for us also has authority over it. And this is why mankind ought to rest. This actually is a way of trusting the sovereignty of God.

Constantly being a busy beast shows a lack of faith in God. That's why mankind ought to rest. In order to give the Lord's will and what he's doing, give it back to him.

Knowing that if you step back from your labor, you are not God over your labor. And so we ought to rest. It is a discipline in our lives that we must heed.

[19:05] God models that for us in the days of creation. Now these Jews, seeing this man who for, think about it, 38 years was laying there without hope, you would expect maybe a different response, not only from that sick man, but wouldn't you expect a different response from people who claim to know God?

Can you imagine seeing this one formerly handicapped man of 38 years walking? And the first thing and the only thing that you have to say to him is, it is the Sabbath.

It is unlawful for you to take up your bed. Are you kidding me? How ridiculous that is. I mean, after all, why in the world would God create such a rule to observe on this day that this miracle can't even be celebrated?

What rules are they talking about? Well, for one, God actually never created such a rule in Exodus 20. This was mankind at its finest, creating different parameters that can help with God's instruction. This is nowhere found in our Bible to not take up your bed on the Sabbath. It is simply extra-biblical mandates and parameters, also known as legalism.

[20:37] In their own way of creating rules to follow God's command in Exodus 20, mankind made it a rule to prohibit the carrying of an object from one domain into another. In this instance, it's a lousy mat, made of reeds, a lousy mat.

Really? You're gonna reprimand this man who's been laying there for 38 years? Because he's carrying that mat. How foolish. What ought to bring praise actually brought persecution.

What ought to bring rejoicing of God's people brought rejection. What a staggering response to the grace of God.

And let's see how this formerly handicapped man responds to the situation. Look with me in verse 11. But he answered them, the man who healed me, that man said to me, take up your bed and walk.

They asked him, who is the man who sent you to take up your bed and walk? Now the man had been, 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.

[21:50] Where does this type of thinking and interaction echo from other places in the Bible? people? Where do you hear echoes of this? Oh, it's not me, it's him.

Genesis. This is where the woman whom you gave to me, she gave me the fruit and I ate it.

Genesis 3.12. Nothing has changed since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. And unlike the Samaritan woman, as John contrasts things, he usually writes in a circular thought, we see him compared to the Samaritan woman.

The Samaritan woman after being revealed who Jesus was, she was released into an evangelistic missionary endeavor back to her city, and where this man is on an endeavor of tattling.

Now to the Jews' dismay, they were unable to find the man breaking their rules.

[ 23 : 00 ] The one not conforming to their molds, they could not find him. And creating their extra biblical piety that felt that they were earning God's favor, this holy land became little gods.

Sticking to their extra biblical authority. They have the authority to dictate the almighty. Now we are corrected in this passage and instructed that all the religious piety that we can conjure up, regardless if it feels like the Bible might support it, various things that we might conjure up in our Christian lives, God does not conform to our piety.

God does not conform to our legalism. He just doesn't. We don't have authority over God, we don't dictate God's terms in this life.

And in this context, we see that Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath. Jesus Christ is actually Lord over all. Our lives ought to conform, not to piety, these rituals and legalism, but to the heart of God.

In this you will find the gospel message of Jesus Christ crucified, buried, resurrected, ascended, that by faith in him we are made new. In the end.

[ 24 : 26 ] That is the gospel. It's not these extra steps of verifying that you're a Christian, things like that, and creating all these parameters and taking this little text out and saying that this is now the formula to weigh if you are actually a Christian.

it exists today and it's absolutely pathetic. What great hope this passage brings us today. What pruning of religious piety this passage brings to us today.

Jesus is Lord over logic, he's Lord and authority over our emotions, and also our intellect. That might sound like it makes sense. It seems as if it was a missed opportunity though in this passage.

Like, okay, we can't find this man who healed this guy. We can't get him reprimanded. He's gone.

But as this text indicates, there is an ominous tone of trouble coming, and indeed there is.

If you know how this narrative actually plays out later, speaking of a blood-stained cross. Verse 14 in this passage, we find Jesus again.

[ 25 : 36 ] 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.

Similar to the words of the woman caught in adultery, this former invalid was instructed to go and sin no more. You've experienced the great power of God. Go and sin no more.

And now this is an indicating that based on this one excerpt out of this passage, that all of a sudden sin is related to illness. This is not what it's saying.

Not all illness is a result of sin. Some moral sins can't provoke God to physical judgment. We see that in 1 Corinthians 11, 28 through 32.

But some illness is simply just a result of imputed sins of the fall in the garden, the fall of mankind.

That our world is broken, life is broken as we know it. And sin has actually had a part in it, but what we're experiencing is that result of the fall and experiencing illness and coronavirus and things like that.

[ 26 : 46 ] It is unclear, actually, in this passage what Jesus meant. Because was this man lying there? Was there maybe a cure, but he was doubting that there is a way to get better?

We have no idea exactly what he meant in this passage. Maybe this guy was actually blaspheming God and dishonoring God's name and thinking that God put him there in that state.

Maybe he just lost in apathy. It's completely unclear, so we can't make conclusions that the Lord's word doesn't actually apply. But what we see here is something very, very clear.

And that the response of God's grace can only be marked in a life of obedience to him. That, see you are well, go and sin no more. That once you experience the transformative power of God, it is then to be marked by life and obedience to him.

So when you read Colossians 3, you see a sort of right and wrong, a standard of living that is different and separate from the world. I imagine this being quite an exciting scene to cause celebration and thanksgiving.

[ 27 : 57 ] I mean, considering maybe that night, I don't know, it said afterward, but we don't know how many days it was afterward. But considering going to bed that night, I'd probably hit my pillow

and not be able to sleep because I'm just filled with excitement.

I'm all of a sudden able to, I can run a marathon. I'm healed. This is great. This might bring a second chance for this sick man, former sick man, to maybe thank God for healing him.

But it's actually absent as we continue in verse 15. The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

How does this former invalid of 38 years repay Jesus for the gift of grace? Tattling. What would be a response of praise in our eyes, in our mindset, as we see other narratives throughout Scripture even, people thanking God after receiving from him?

There's no praise. There's just tattling. And there's not even praise from the Jews who are supposed to be closest to God. There's rejection of it.

[ 29 : 14 ] Truly, we can see the context of this sign and wonder, right? That last sermon that we had with the official's son, keeping that in mind, it was clear that it is better for mankind to see without believing, right?

We established that within the context of the series. Now, we see the miraculous grace of God healing the handicapped man, and it seems like all the attention now in this narrative, this whole narrative of this sick man is focused off of that miracle and upon the attitudes of man.

Could this be important? I would say absolutely. All of this narrative actually shifts away from the healing sickness and points to man's rejection of Jesus Christ.

The grace that man has received freely, without merit, is rejected, without thanksgiving. today. This is the shift in John's gospel, which continues to raise tension, because how about verse 17 for tension?

Look down with me. It says, but Jesus answered them, my father is working until now, and I am working. In essence, Jesus boldly proclaims to those who should welcome him.

[ 30 : 45 ] The people in Jerusalem, those faithful Jews, are rejecting him. But as verse 17 states to the Pharisees, essentially, he's saying that you think that you have authority over me?

You think that you are little gods and you can dictate the terms of the Almighty? Creating extra-biblical piety that reflects nothing of which I intended in Exodus 20?

Well, God is always working, even in counter with the parameters of your Sabbath, your old holy Sabbath day. And I am working, if God is working, because guess what?

I'm God. You could imagine the mic drop at this point. These Jews were probably going through every scenario that this man has no right to live.

Thus being leading and pointing to the cross. What a statement. What boldness. It's almost like we are thinking, oh wait, what miracle at this point.

[ 31 : 55 ] It becomes such an afterthought because that wasn't the point of John bringing this out of the passage. These signs and wonders, according to John, revealing the reasons why Jesus did the signs and wonders, according to John 20, verse 30 through 31, was to show that he is truly the son of God, that he is divine, to reveal, to pull out his divine identity and reveal to the world who he is.

And guess what? The people who are outcasted received him. The people who were supposed to know him and welcome him were the ones who rejected him and put him upon the cross.

So as we come to a close today, whether you admit it or not, regardless of your perception of your own spiritual maturity in this life, you might read this passage and be like, well, good thing I'm not legalistic.

You know, I don't even know why Brent's even preaching this. I mean, this doesn't even apply to me. Wait a minute. We are all guilty of creating these expectations and parameters in our lives for God to follow in essence.

that we expect God, if we fast, if we do a Daniel fast, that all of a sudden we're going to be able to pay off our debt, we're going to get a check in the mail.

[ 33 : 14 ] Who called you a little God? We sometimes have perceptions that if we pray diligently to God every night and we're on a marathon, that we're going to receive something.

thinking that we're dictating the parameters of God's grace. Don't be silly. You are not little gods.

Thinking that if you do all X, Y, Z and you're going to get ABC for it, if you do something, you're going to receive these parameters that were created in these Jewish people's life of obtaining God's grace.

Don't be fooled. We are all guilty of this, church. We are all guilty of this. We clearly have a pattern to follow, similar to Pilgrim's progress with the old John Bunyan of leading Pilgrim out through that path as he focuses upon the light and it safely leads him from the two ferocious wolves, beasts that were in the shadows.

We have a pattern to follow. Our lives are not to be guided by what we feel might be right or calculate by logic or perceive as maybe convenient or comfortable.

Using the Sabbath, maybe saying that, yes, I'm going to observe the Sabbath for X, Y, Z, where it's actually just an excuse for you so that you can veg out and read and watch Disney Plus and just eat some popcorn and maybe spend your time with the guys down, play some darts.

[ 35 : 05 ] Well, it's the Sabbath, right? We're supposed to receive, we're supposed to observe it.

Almost as strictly as if you're sitting at a park bench. I mean, God forbid the Lord prompts you to go speak with somebody and pray with somebody passing you by at the park because you're trying to observe that Sabbath.

Often we create these parameters in our lives as spiritual disciplines, but they're actually masked in piety. Living in our world today, we are called to live in the shadow of the cross, and this is a life of denying ourselves and following Jesus.

It comes at a cost and may even lead to situations that don't feel good, that situations that fail to logically make sense and even fail to bring comfort.

All of a sudden you're uncomfortable being a Christian because you feel as if God is calling you to do something for him. If you think God's, your, if you think God's, your response to the gospel should be ease and comfort, like living a, like the American dream, sitting in with your white picket fence and, you know, just doing a good deed here and there, going to church, you know, doing your tithe and everything, X, Y, Z, that you're going to ultimately be blessed because of that.

All I got to say is I hope you're right. I hope you're right in living that lifestyle. Because according to the inspired word of God, if there is anything comforting to you outside of God's grace and salvation, meaning the gospel, it may question if you are even saved at all.

[ 36 : 55 ] Jesus is truly Lord over all and his grace is lavished upon us in saving us, of rescuing us out of our pit of sin and forgiving us.

This isn't going to lead to a comfortable, cookie-cutter, American dream life. We're not going to be healthy the rest of our days because we're Christians. Actually, I would challenge that fact and say you might actually be suffering more.

I mean, the gospel of Paul, Paul's writings look nothing like some of the churches teach today. Like, it's just, it's astounding.

Jesus is truly Lord over all, health and sickness and all tradition, any parameters that you can set.

And this should cause us to evaluate our personal tendencies of comfortability, to ask, are we conforming to our culture rather than conforming to Christ?

According to this message in this book, there is only one way of conforming. It begins not with God conforming to our desires. We are not little gods. We do not ask, we do not command God to do our bidding.

[ 38 : 03 ] We put ourselves under the authority of God, even in sickness and in health or our traditions. It begins with us, church. We must remove every brick that we put into our lives that God never put there.

Unless we put the, we build a house, our dream home in vain. The Bible admonishes us to lay aside everything that might hinder us in the purpose and to run life's race, fixing our eyes upon Jesus, the authority and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame.

He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. This is Hebrews 12, 2. Church, you want to know the instructions for your life, not more parameters. It's submission to Jesus Christ, obedience to him according to his word.

So I challenge you today to expunge self-idolatry from your life and flee the snare of religious piety and legalism, of assuming that you have authority over God.

We do desire that what we do is pleasing to God, but by no means do we have that authority to set the expectation that we want to be relieved of something.

[ 39 : 25 ] We want to get better, so I'm just going to fast. Like, really? That's what the Lord's word tells you to do? Fix our eyes upon Jesus, not self- idolatry in your life, and flee the snare of religious piety and legalism.

I want to close with an excerpt out of Barnhouse's book, *The Christian and the Sabbath*, and it says, when we are thus free, the Lord will possess our Mondays and Tuesdays, our Wednesdays and our Thursdays, our Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and all our days and weeks and months and years because he has bought us and possesses our hearts in simple grace.

And not only does God possess the days of the week and the months, he also possesses and he has authority over your sickness and illness. Let's be encouraged today and marvel at the fact of God's grace to us undeserved sinners, that Jesus is truly Lord over all.

Please join me in prayer as we continue to reflect upon God's word and respond. If you do need prayer today, please come forward. I'll be sitting somewhere around here. I would love to pray for you, and let's pray.

I'll be right back.