

## THE GOSPEL OF

**JOHN**

STUDENT LESSON

**MIRACLE AT  
BETHESDA**

## Open it

1. Would you rather swim in the ocean, a lake, or a pool? What are the pros and cons of each?

## Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read John 5:1–18.

2. Who are the main characters of this passage?
3. Where does this account take place?
4. What big event happens in this passage?
5. When did this occur? What was going on at the time?

## Day 2 — Today's Theme: Sickness and Survival

### Read John 5:1–9.

The book *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst, is a humorous children's story about a boy named Alexander who has "one of those days." Nothing, I mean nothing, goes right for him. From the time he pops out of bed in the morning until he crawls back into bed that night, his day stinks. This poor little guy falls, spills, trips, crashes, and encounters one interrupting, aggravating circumstance after another. In fact, as the story progresses, he begins to say, "I think I'll move to Australia," believing that life in Australia would be much better. It's one of those days that Alexander hopes never, ever to have again.

Have you ever had one of those days? A day when it seemed that no matter what you tried to do, where you may have gone, or the choices you made, the day simply went from bad to worse?<sup>1</sup>

It is safe to say this man in John 5, terribly ill for such a long time, had been having not just one, but 38 years of Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Days, like our fictional character, Alexander.

In this Bible passage, Jesus is in Jerusalem (v.1). He visits the pool of Bethesda, which means "House of Mercy" in Hebrew.

This is the site of one of only two miracles that Jesus performed in Jerusalem, both associated with water (the other being the blind man's healing at the Pool of Siloam in John 9:1–12). Water was always critical for life in this part of the world. Tired pilgrims would head here in large crowds to refresh themselves and partake in ritual cleansings before going to the Temple.<sup>2</sup>

Near the pool were five porches or porticoes (a structure consisting of a roof supported by columns at regular intervals, typically attached as a porch to a building). In these lay a great many sick people, including this certain man who had been lame for 38 years. There was a belief that an angel stirred the pool occasionally, and when that happened, the first person to step into the water would be healed.

**6. Have you ever visited a sick friend or relative (in the hospital or at their home)? What was it like?**

**7. What question did Jesus ask the man in verse 6? Why do you think Jesus asked him this question?**

**8. How did this sick man respond to Jesus? How do we often respond when someone offers to help us?**

---

<sup>1</sup> (<https://www.insight.org/resources/article-library/individual/surviving-survival-mode>)

<sup>2</sup> ([https://www.land-of-the-bible.com/The\\_Pool\\_of\\_Bethesda](https://www.land-of-the-bible.com/The_Pool_of_Bethesda))

## Day 3 — Today's Theme: Sabbath

### Read John 5:9–13.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to set apart a particular day to remind them of the importance of their relationship with God. The Sabbath was the day to stop work and remember all that God has done and enjoy it ([Exodus 20:8-11](#)). Unfortunately, in their zeal to keep the Law, the Israelites added law upon law to make sure no one did any work, and so the Sabbath became more about law-keeping than it was about rejoicing and enjoying God and His creation....

In the New Testament, Jesus says He comes not to destroy the law but to fulfil it (Matthew 5). One of those laws was the Sabbath law. Jesus fulfills the Sabbath law by opening the way for us (through his death and resurrection) to enter God's Sabbath (rest) by enabling us to have a restored relationship with God. Those who are Christian (who have put their trust in Jesus) are in God's Sabbath now and always, so there is now no need for one special day each week. In fact, in a sense, every day is now a Sabbath day to be kept holy. The important thing to know is that we no longer need to keep the Sabbath as in the Old Testament, nor are we required to do anything special on any particular day. Rather, every day we are to live for God.

Though we aren't required to, the idea of putting aside a day each week to focus on all that God has done is a really good idea. In many traditions, that day is Sunday when Christians go to church. It's a day when Christians gather together to especially rejoice in their new relationship with God and their new relationships with each other. It's a day when we remind ourselves of all that God has done for us and encourage each other to stand firm in Jesus and look forward to the day when He will come back and we will fully enter God's Sabbath.<sup>3</sup>

### 9. Looking at Exodus 20:8–11...

- a. How many days are we to work?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Who was included in the rest day (Sabbath)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. What example does this Commandment follow? (Hint: Genesis 1–2)

### 10. What does Sunday look like in your family home? Share something you love about Sundays.

---

<sup>3</sup>(<https://fervr.net/bible/whats-the-deal-with-the-sabbath>)

## Day 4 — Today's Theme: Strength

### Read John 5:14–15.

First, we have seen this man's decision made between John 5, verses 8 and 9. It was a decision to believe Jesus could heal him completely, which is shown by his obedience in John 5:9: he "took up his bed and walked."

Next, the newly-healed man has a second choice in John 5:14, where Jesus commands the man to, "...Sin no more..." here we see Jesus calling this man to live a righteous life, to walk by faith.

When Jesus came back to talk to this man in the temple (John 5:14), it was an expression of mercy and an offer of grace. Jesus shows here how interested He is in the rest of the man's life—not just physical healing so he can now walk and even carry his bed, but eternal life with Jesus forever.

In the same way, Jesus desires all people to be saved. Here's a representation of what that means:

**GOD** created us to be with Him (Genesis 1–2).

**OUR** sin separates us from God (Genesis 3).

**SINS** cannot be removed by good deeds (Genesis 4–Malachi 4).

**PAYING** the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again (Matthew–Luke).

**EVERYONE** who repents and trusts in Him alone has eternal life (John).

**LIFE** with Jesus starts now and lasts forever (Acts–Revelation).<sup>4</sup>

**11. What separates us from God? Can this problem be fixed in our own strength (by good deeds)? Why or why not?**

**12. How can we have eternal life with God?**

**13. Who do you know who needs to know the Gospel? Pray for that person today.**

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dare2share.org/resources/life-in-6-words/>

## Day 5 — Today's Theme: Sameness

### Read John 5:16–18.

*<sup>16</sup> Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath day. So the Jewish leaders began to oppose him. <sup>17</sup> Jesus defended himself. He said to them, "My Father is always doing his work. He is working right up to this day. I am working too." <sup>18</sup> For this reason the Jewish leaders tried even harder to kill him. According to them, Jesus was not only breaking the law of the Sabbath day. He was even calling God his own Father. He was making himself equal with God (NirV).*

Sometimes we can be confused about who Jesus is. In these verses, the Jewish leaders were offended that Jesus called God His own Father. They considered Jesus' claim to be God, or equal with God, to be blasphemy (the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God). Here are some more ideas to help us understand Jesus' relationship with God the Father:

#### **Jesus Is the Son of God.**

Some claim that because Jesus is the Son of God, He must be a lesser God than God the Father. Among the ancients, however, an important meaning of *Son of* is "one who has the same nature as." Jesus, as the Son of God, has the very nature of God (John 5:18, 10:30, 19:7). He is thus not a lesser God.

#### **The Father is "Greater" than Jesus.**

Some cults argue that because Jesus said the Father is "greater" than Him (John 14:28), this must mean Jesus is a lesser God. Biblically, however, Jesus is equal with the Father in His divine nature (John 10:30). He was *positionally* lower than the Father from the standpoint of His becoming a servant by taking on human likeness (Philippians 2:6–11). Positionally, then, the Father was "greater" than Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

### 14. Why were the Jewish leaders angry?

### 15. How have you seen God work in someone's life (your own or others)? What was your response?

---

<sup>5</sup> (<https://answersingenesis.org/jesus/jesus-is-god/is-jesus-god/>)

This study was written by Pastors Jeremy Anderson and Mario Arindaeng. [www.villagebible.church/students](http://www.villagebible.church/students)