

Come and see Jesus' glory, full of grace and truth.

John 4:43-5:18. (*5:4 is missing from our Bibles because the oldest and most reliable manuscripts don't have it. (see the note at the bottom of the page of your Bible) I'm reinserting it because the story flows much better with it)

The two days in Samaria are over. That means that it is **on the third day** that Jesus moves on again. Interesting. (a tiny reminder that this is the risen Jesus?)

Jesus goes to Galilee. The Galileans received/welcome him (see 1:12) because they had **seen** all that he had done in Jerusalem.

A royal official, **based on what he has heard** about Jesus approaches Jesus and begs for the life of his little son.

Jesus' response does not sound very compassionate. But the 'you' in Jesus' answer is plural both times. As the NIV nicely picks up. "you people". So even though Jesus sounds grumbly, it seems to be a grumble or a caution directed to people who long for signs and miracles and are not willing to believe unless they see something impressive. Jesus is not very excited about doing miracles. Just like at Cana.

Jesus does **not** do what the man asks. He does not come with him, instead, he says, 'you may go, your son will live'.

The man believes the word Jesus speaks to him.

He starts to go home. On the way his servants meet him. His boy is better. He puts two and two together. His son's fever broke right at the time Jesus spoke. And he and his whole household, believed.

This is the second sign of Jesus' glory. And as Jesus revealed his grace and truth, a boy's life was saved, his whole family and all the servants believed.

Do you believe?

Jesus goes to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.

Excavators have found the pool and the porches that John tells us about. The porches were full of sick people and their friends, all trying to get them into the water when it is stirred up.

One guy has been an invalid for 38 years. The only other reference to 38 years in the Bible is in Deuteronomy 2, where we learn that the Israelites were in the wilderness for 38 years. Hmmmm. Interesting. (A tiny reminder that Jesus is the Saviour and Healer of all Israel, of all the people of God?)

Jesus asks him, 'Do you want to be made well?'

What?

Well, this man may have had a really good thing going as a beggar. He's been lying there so long that three generations of temple goers had been supporting him. Maybe it was kind of a ritual for some families. 'Are you going to the temple? Here bring this for.....'

But the question comes because in John, those who are saved or healed must want the gift Jesus is offering. We who would be healed by Jesus have to decide if we want the radical gift of freedom and responsibility that comes with being healed. On the day of his healing, **as on the day of our own**, everything changes. He could say, 'I'm

just a cripple'. We can say, 'I'm just a _____', and expectations and responsibilities are set accordingly. Crazy as it is, our addictions and our sinful habits, our sufferings may also be our comfort zones.

Do you want to get well?

When God heals us we get a new identity, new freedom **and** new responsibilities. That's why Jesus' question to this man, and his question to **us** is always a joyful and scary question at the same time. (Boring and Craddock in 'The Peoples' New Testament Commentary)

How do **you** answer Jesus?

The man is healed.

It is the Sabbath day. (Do you hear that ominous theme from Jaws here?)

The Sabbath day was and is for the Jewish people a sanctuary in time. Two reasons are given for Sabbath.

1. The pattern of God in his work of creating, then resting and enjoying his creation. (Exodus 20).
2. The reality that God's people are free, not slaves. (Deuteronomy 5)

The Sabbath was and is for the Jewish people a holy day. A day set apart. A stop day. It shaped and still shapes a community of people who dare to believe that they are free.

The Jewish Sabbath begins and ends with special meals, candle lighting and prayers. The Jewish leaders here in John are guardians of the Sabbath as the sanctuary in time.

The Church (I do not know quite when) took over the Sabbath and imported the Sabbath concepts into Sunday. Many of us grew up that way.

What was that like for you? I experienced it as basically a good thing, a blessing.

Our Sunday Sabbath was marked by morning and evening worship.

Farm chores were only what were necessary.

No financial transactions. We would not date a cheque for Sunday. There was no advertising. Driving a company vehicle with signs on the side was frowned upon.

No stores were open.

No serious travel, certainly no restaurant meals, because then other people had to work for us.

No organized sports. No TV.

Some parents did not let their kids ride bikes. Mine did.

Reading was allowed. That worked for me and for our bookworm family.

We did not do homework on Sundays.

The parents had long afternoon naps. Kids played with their friends.

Again, there was much that was good. It did give us a life rhythm and I think we felt that we were not slaves to work. It is an act of faith to accept this gift. I hope that you who are parents will think about some wise and healthy ways to give your family and children the experience that this is a day of rest and freedom. (Don't use it for homework!) (exams etc....)

The danger of this Sabbath keeping is the great temptation to legalism. It is so tempting to layer rules upon rules, to use it to check up on who is faithful and who is not.

Here, the Jews notice a man carrying his bed. Their 'Sabbath alarm' goes off. They bring the command down on him. Then they find out that there is someone going around.... someone going around doing what? Someone going around rescuing people from a life time of illness?

No! Someone going around telling people to **carry furniture** on the Sabbath! This person is destroying the Sabbath! The structure of their life before God is being torn apart. He must be stopped.

They begin to harass Jesus.

He answers them, and they know that he must be eliminated.

He is breaking the Sabbath, and in his answer he is claiming to be equal with God. They want to kill him. One day they will.

What do we see of Jesus' glory here?

His glory is the glory of grace and truth, love and faithfulness. But do not mistake this for weakness! Jesus has all authority. He is unafraid, he uses his authority to set people free.

He gives the word and a boy lives. He speaks and a life-long invalid is healed.

These miracles are signs and wonders of his authority. If you read on into verse 19 you can sense that already in that day there were questions. Why only one man healed at the pool? What about we who live now? Why is anyone who loves and trusts Jesus sick? Why do we have a list in our bulletin with all these people who have health struggles every day?

The signs Jesus does are in part signs of the time to come. They point to Jesus and they point forward to the day we are all living toward.

I have heard more than once that our sense of hearing is the last to go when we die. Here is what we are promised: Whatever the last sound we hear on earth, whether it is the voice of our child, or our friend or spouse, whether it is that ungodly 'bang' of a car crash or the beep, beep, beep of medical monitors, the next sound we will hear is the voice of Jesus the Son of God.

Listen:

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned. A time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

John 5:25

The Lord be gracious to you.

The Lord be gracious to me. And all God's people said, Amen.