

## Jesus' Conversation with a Paralyzed Man

Message 3 of 6 in the series: "Conversations with Jesus"

### 1. In his gospel, John recorded some amazing conversations people had with Jesus so that we can confidently trust Him as our Lord and Savior.

"The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written **so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God**, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name." John 20:30-31 (NLT)

### 2. One day Jesus began a conversation with a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years.

"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, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, '**Do you want to be made well?**' The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, '**Rise, take up your bed and walk.**' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked." John 5:1-9a (NKJV)

- a. Jesus didn't ask the paralyzed man a stupid question. When we've been stuck in a difficult situation for a long time, it's easy to move from feeling helpless to feeling hopeless.

"When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, **we finally gave up all hope** of being saved." Acts 27:20 (NIV)

"Hope deferred makes the **heart sick**, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life." Proverbs 13:12 (NIV)

- b. Jesus didn't ask the paralyzed man why he hadn't solved his problems by himself, made excuses, or placed blame. We all do these things because of our sinful fallen nature.

"Then the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.' 'Who told you that you were naked?' the Lord God asked. 'Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?' The man replied, '**It was the woman you gave me** who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.'" Genesis 3:9-12 (NLT)

- c. Jesus asked the paralyzed man "Do you want to be made well?" because He came to help those who need help and bring hope to the hopeless.

"When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.' He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. Then he began to speak to them. '**The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!**'" Luke 4:16-21 (NLT) (*Isaiah 61:1-2*)

**Life Application:** We need to come to Jesus.

"...Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and **you will find rest for your souls**. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

### 3. The paralyzed man's healing conversation with Jesus caused him to get into a hostile conversation with the Pharisees.

"But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, 'You can't work on the Sabbath! The law doesn't allow you to carry that sleeping mat!' But he replied, 'The man who healed me told me, "Pick up your mat and walk.'" 'Who said such a thing as that?' they demanded. The man didn't know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, 'Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to

you.’ Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him. So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules.” John 5:9b-16 (NLT)

*Background Information:* In Jesus’ day, the Pharisees were self-appointed enforcers of religious rules and traditions which they had developed to help them avoid breaking any commandments in the OT Law. They believed that their strict legalism earned them favor with God and made them more righteous than others. For example, the Pharisees had developed **39 categories** of things Jews couldn’t do on the Sabbath in order stay miles away from breaking the fourth commandment, “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work.”

(Exodus 20:8-10a NLT)

- a. Jesus knew He had healed the paralyzed man on a Sabbath day. He told the man to carry his mat home anyway because he wanted to reveal to the Pharisees that they cared more about keeping their own rules than helping others or understanding God’s heart.

“...The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don’t follow their example. For they don’t practice what they teach. They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden... What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people’s faces. You won’t go in yourselves, and you don’t let others enter either ...you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.” Matthew 23:1-4, 13, & 23b (NLT)

**Life Application:** We need to always keep the main thing, the main thing.

“One of them (the Pharisees), an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?’ Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:35-40 (NLT)

- b. Jesus told the formerly paralyzed man “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you” because He didn’t heal the man just so he could go back to his former way of life.

“Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.” Romans 6:1-4 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 03-19-23 • [john@centeringlives.com](mailto:john@centeringlives.com)

### Connect Group Questions:

Read John 5:1-16 and then discuss the following questions:

1. Have you ever experienced a long-lasting illness or injury which took a long time to heal? If so, what happened? What did you learn from this experience?
2. Why do you think hope is such an important part of our lives? What happens to us when we lose hope?
3. Read Mark 3:1-6 & Luke 13:10-17. Why do you think Jesus repeatedly healed people on Sabbath days when he knew this would infuriate legalistic Pharisees?
4. Read Micah 6:8, Hosea 6:4-7, Jeremiah 22:3, & Matthew 22:34-40. What do these passages teach us about keeping the main thing the main thing?

5. Discuss the following statements:
  - When we've been stuck in a difficult situation for a long time, it's easy to move from feeling helpless to feeling hopeless. (Acts 27:20, Proverbs 13:12)
  - Jesus didn't ask the paralyzed man why he hadn't solved his problems by himself, made excuses, or placed blame. We all do these things because of our sinful fallen nature. (Genesis 3:9-12)
  - Jesus asked the paralyzed man "Do you want to be made well?" because He came to help those who need help and bring hope to the hopeless. (Luke 4:16-21, Matthew 11:28-29)
6. Spend some time as a group praying for our church. Ask God to help us see others as He sees them, trust him more, worry less, and proclaim the gospel with boldness and power.