

Home Group Leaders' Notes
Week of March 21, 2021
John 5:1-15

JUST FOR FUN

Act out what you need? (Your leader has instructions)

Want to laugh a little?

Ask people to act out something that they need. The audience then guessed what it is that they need.

Instructions:

- 1) Ask 4 -6 people to be willing to do a silent charade.
- 2) Give them up to 30 seconds
- 3) They cannot speak or point to something or spell it in any way (e.g. ASL)

Here are some choices. Cut them up into strips of paper to hand to them one at a time

- I am thirsty and need a drink of water
- Your house is on fire
- Call the police
- Your toilet is plugged up
- My dog has fleas
- I HATE charades



WHEN WERE YOU IN NEED?

When was a time when you were in need, and at just the right time, someone helped? (Ideas: Help could be physical, emotional, financial, career, connections, friendship, etc.)

The focus this week is on how people respond to Jesus when we are in need. This opening question helps us to begin to focus on Jesus' purpose and power to meet us in times of need.



LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

In recent weeks in the Gospel of John, Jesus has revealed His identity, His mission to help, and His invitation to learn of and trust in Him. This week, Jesus encounters another person in need. Read John 5:1-15.

Consider the big picture:

- Where is Jesus? Why?
- Where is His encounter? Who is there? Why is He there?
- What do we know about the man Jesus heals?
- Who inquires? Why?
- Where is Jesus' second encounter with the man? How did that happen?

Verse six says that "Jesus saw him ... and learned." What might this tell us about Jesus' character and ministry? (6)

Jesus put Himself around people of great need. He sought out this man because of years of suffering. The religious establishment didn't care about the man, only their man-made rules. Jesus saw the man and inquired so that He might help him.

Jesus question seems ludicrous. How might this question be significant in the meaning of this story and the big picture thus far in "The Gospel of John?" (6)

Jesus always had two purposes, the present and the future, the present physical suffering and the eternal invisible life. His question for meant to arouse in the man a question about his will – was he willing to take the next step toward healing. This question was meant to be both physical and spiritual.

What was his answer? What do we learn about the man from his answer? (7)

The lame man's response to Jesus' question.

- It could have been a simple "YES!"
- I have no one (he is a victim, he cannot do it himself, he needs someone/something)
- The man was believing a myth about the healing powers in the water
- The man was perhaps resentful of others getting in first (blaming?)
- Note: Even after he was healed, there is no sign of gratitude toward Jesus or God



Jesus' response is also curious. What would you expect Jesus to say? What might we expect the man to say back? (8)

Jesus' words are not, "Be healed" or "You are healed." He told him to ...

- **pick up his mat and walk**
- **We see that Jesus had reason for His actions – to stimulate further teaching**
- **Question: Where was this man's destination?**

What are Jesus' two commands in this story?

Jesus' two commands:

- 1) **"Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."**
- 2) **"Stop sinning"**

The term, "The Jews," was often used of Jewish religious authorities. What was their response? What was missing? (10-12)

- **Question: Was this really a Sabbath law? Was it sin when you were just healed? Could someone else have carried his mat? How did he get there on the Sabbath? Did he live there?**
- **Their response did not show marvel, thankfulness, empathy, joy, etc..**
- **Their question was about "Who" had violated their law. They missed the whole point that the Messiah has come.**

Do you think that the fourth Commandment* was meant to forbid a healed person from carrying their mat? Why or why not? (*"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy")
God's command was motivated out of love for people. He wanted them to learn to rest in their faith in God's provision. Therefore, the command was about ceasing to work to get more, have more. Thus, this was not a violation of the law.

Knowing the purpose of "The Gospel of John" (20:31), how does this story fit into John's purpose? (i.e. What does this teach us about people responding in belief / faith in Jesus?)
Jesus purpose was to bring about belief, for people to turn to and trust in Him for eternal life. This story teaches us that even when God does a miracle in our lives, we sometimes don't acknowledge Him, thank Him, turn to Him in faith. Also, we learn that we can become so focused on getting what we need that we ignore how we respond to God in harmful ways. In this case, this man's action brought about persecution of Jesus.

How does this response contrast that of John 4:49-53?

Note the differences of response:

- **In chapter four, the sign resulted in faith in Jesus**
- **Here: The Jews think Jesus has sinned, broken Sabbath law**
- **The healed man took no responsibility for the action on the Sabbath**
- **Here: Jesus sought the man on the temple plaza**
- **Here: The healed man was told to stop sinning but then reported on Jesus**
- **Here: This caused persecution against Jesus**

What are the ways that Jesus helped this man? How is He still helping us in our lives?

We know from Scripture that God is always working, bringing about His kingdom, helping us to know Him and His good news. Here, Jesus helped this man both physically through a supernatural healing, and awakened him to his sin. While we see that the man responded poorly, we don't know the final outcome.

For us, God is always doing what is best for His perfect plans and causes all things to work together for good (Romans 8:28). He is ever-interceding for us.

Jesus has healed us all. What are some the ways that Jesus has healed you? How might we share God's healing with others?

This could be a part of your sharing time. Throughout Jesus' ministry, he was helping people. Only some shared with others.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What are some ways that we might say 'No' to Jesus question, "Do you want to get well?" How are we at being real about needing help? Why does it seem like everyone in church is 'Fine?'

Sorry that I stacked so many questions here, not a good idea. This discuss was meant to help us realize that sometimes, we don't want God's answer or God's intervention. Also, we are very reluctant to reveal to God's people / to one another that we are needing help, that there are strongholds keeping us down.

It is so easy to act like everything is 'fine.'



Since we are to like Jesus, how can we learn to 'see' and 'learn' about people in need? (6) How can we respond when we do?

I don't consider myself as someone who does this well. But I have seen this in my friends, Jeff and Kathi McNair:

- **Put yourself in places with needy people (For example, the Light and Power family)**
- **Listen, watch, and learn about the people.**
- **Be there in people's lives.**
- **Be slow to offer solutions of words.**
- **Develop compassion by asking God for compassion.**
- **Practice of compassion leads to more compassion.**
- **Put yourself in the place of others. What would you want others to do?**
- **Imitate Jesus**

Neither the "man" nor "the Jews" responded well. How do we sometimes feel when people don't respond well to our offer of help? What will keep us from responding poorly to those people or to helping in general?

A natural human reaction is to give up, shake of the dust, and move on. We take it personally and think better next time. I remember giving a gift card to someone and then found out they sold it to get money for drugs. Should I not give again?

When I see how many times Jesus wasn't thanked or was rejected, I want to learn from Him. God is a giver who keeps on loving, searching, forgiving. I have also seen that in examples of Jesus followers in life and in books. This inspires me to keep helping.

How can we keep both forms of Jesus' healing in our relationships and serving?

Our culture urges us to care for the physical and emotional needs of people. So does God. But Jesus always included the eternal needs. For us, this means that we point people to God / Jesus as the real helper, the One who cares for our bodies, our hearts, and our eternal soul.

**May God, our Helper, empower you to share His love and truth,
Steve**