

Life of Christ

A Lame Man is Healed

John 5:1-47

Younger Verse

Everyone who hears my message and has faith in the one who sent me has eternal life.
John 5:24 (CEV)

Older Verse

I tell you for certain that everyone who hears my message and has faith in the one who sent me has eternal life and will never be condemned. They have already gone from death to life.
John 5:24 (CEV)

Bible Story

The following is a summary of the Bible story to help supplement your preparation. In your personal study time, use this summary as a guide, and make notes to help you remember your plans for the lesson. Please do **NOT** read to the children.

As we look in the Bible today for our story, we read “after these things” or “later on . . . Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” What things had happened before this? Where had Jesus been? Well, we know that He had been in Jerusalem earlier for the feast of the Passover when He sent out of the temple those people who had been buying and selling. Where did He go after that? He met a woman at a well. Samaria! But, He passed through Samaria on His way to another place, the place where He first changed water to wine and where He met an official whose son He healed. What place did these things happen in? Cana, a city in Galilee! So, we read from the Bible for our story today that, “After *these* things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” Do you remember that because of another feast, the Passover, Jesus went to Jerusalem earlier? That is what Jewish men did when there was a religious festival; they went to Jerusalem.

What was so special about Jerusalem? Well, the temple, the church where the Jewish people worshipped, was in Jerusalem. They did not have many churches like we do. They had one church which they called the temple. There was another thing about Jerusalem that is different from our cities today. Jerusalem had a wall around it! In that wall were many gates that would allow the people to pass from the city to the outside. There was a gate near the temple called the sheep gate. Do you remember when we talked about the Passover and sheep being killed to remember how God rescued His people? This is the gate the sheep would come through to be taken to the temple. Near this gate was a pool, called Bethesda. This pool had five porches. Many sick people stayed by this pool hoping someone would help them get well. The Bible tells us that there was one man who had been sick there for thirty-eight years!

When Jesus came back to Jerusalem, he happened to be at the pool and saw this man. Jesus knew that this man had been sick a very long time. Just like Jesus seemed to do, He asked the man a question we wouldn't think to ask. Jesus asked the man if he wanted to get well! Then Jesus simply told him to get up, pick up what he had been lying on, and walk. Sounds easy, huh? But remember, this man probably hadn't walked for thirty-eight years! Just like the official with the

Lesson Goals

Discuss the importance of wanting to be different. Jesus asked the lame man if he wanted to get well. It's the same with us; to change, we must want to “get well.”
Discuss tradition vs. sufficiency of Scripture.

sick son, this man had to decide if he would believe Jesus. Would he get up and walk or would he make excuses about how he had not walked for a very long time? The man chose to believe Jesus. The man became well immediately and he got up, took his pallet (bed roll) and started walking! What a miracle! What a happy day for rejoicing! A man who hadn't walked in years was walking!

Even though this was a wonderful reason to celebrate, there were some men who were not very happy. They saw the man walking and instead of being happy for him they asked him why he was breaking the rules by carrying his pallet. Carrying his pallet on the Sabbath day was considered work. The Sabbath for the Jews is like Sunday for us. It was a day to go to church and to worship God. These men, who were so upset, were Jewish men who studied the Bible, the Old Testament, and they thought that by knowing everything the Bible said, they could make it to heaven and have eternal life. They did not understand that what they were reading in the Bible talked about Jesus. They did not believe that Jesus was God's Son, but there are verses in the Bible that were written hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus was born and tell where He would be born or who His ancestors would be and even how He would die. So if studied, these verses should have made it easier to accept Jesus as God's Son. But these men missed it. They studied and studied, but they also made up their own rules to go along with the Bible. These rules are not in the Bible, but the Jews followed them sometimes even more than they obeyed the Bible. Some of these rules talked about working on the Sabbath day. The rules said that you could only walk a certain number of steps on the Sabbath day (not more than 2, 000) and that if you walked more, you had broken the rule. Another rule said that it was all right to pull your ox out of a ditch on the Sabbath, but that it was work (and breaking the rule) if you helped a sick person!

These men couldn't or wouldn't see the amazing miracle or sign that Jesus had just performed because all they could see was their made-up list of rules. Rules are a good thing, and we need them to do what is right, but making a rule more important than doing what God asks us to do is not a good thing. Jesus saw the lame man and wanted to help him, even if it was the Sabbath day. He wanted this man to know about Him. Reading and studying the Bible are also really good things. But we need to be careful not to make things up as we read and we always need to pray, asking God to teach us when we read the Bible. There are many things written in the Bible about Jesus. It tells us that He is God's Son and that He came to die in our place to make a way for us to have a friendship with Him. Have you trusted in Jesus as God's Son? If not, will you right now? If so, will you help someone else know about Him?

Ask your students to think of songs they know (or invent one of their own). Help your students put the Bible verse to music, dividing into 2-4 smaller, more manageable groups if necessary.

Pray that your students will have a love for God's Word and be ready to obey. Pray that they will see that it is enough, sufficient, for all of our needs and problems and questions. The Bible needs nothing added to it, especially our made-up rules.

**Memory Verse
Activities**

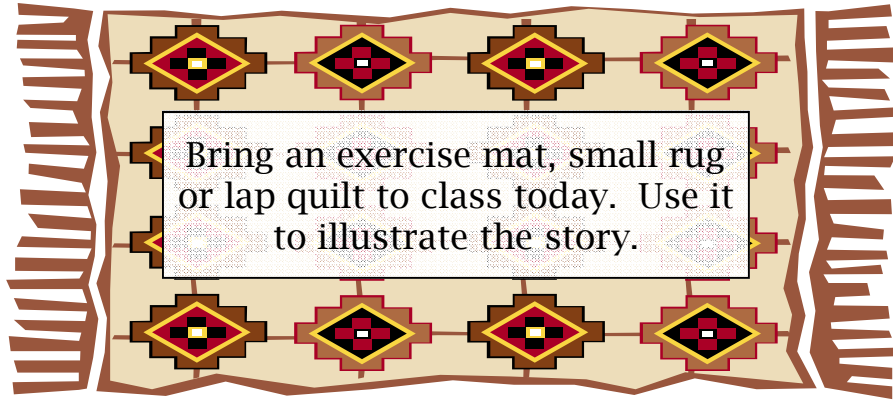
Prayer Time

Preparing for Next Week

Lesson 14
Jesus Feeds a Big Crowd
John 6:1-15

Preschool Lesson

Jesus Can Do Things No One Else Can Do!



Show the “pallet” that you brought. Ask, “What can this be used for?” Wait for responses. Ask each student if they would like to lie on it for a moment.

Teach: Did you know that there was a man in the Bible, a long, long time ago, who used something a lot like this when he was sick. We open the Bible (open your Bibles) and read that a man was sick. He had been sick for a long time, thirty-eight years! He had been sick longer than most of your mommies and daddies have lived. And while he was sick, he lay by a pool on a mat or pallet. He waited a very long time for someone to help him get well. He waited and he waited and then one day, someone came up to him, and stood over him and said, “Get up, pick up your mat and walk!”

Well, what do you think would happen if you were the one standing over him? Do you think the man would be able to walk just because you wanted him to? NO! What if it were me? Could I make him walk? NO! But the one standing over the sick man wasn't you and it wasn't me - it was Jesus! And Jesus can do things that you and I can't do. He can do things no one else can do! Immediately, the sick man was well and he obeyed Jesus by getting up, picking up his mat and walking! Yeah! What a great day! The sick man could walk!

Pray: Thank you, God, for making sick people well. Thank you for doing things no one else can do!

Activities

- Provide coloring pages and word puzzles that will enhance what you have taught today.
- Provide a map of Judea and Galilee for viewing Jesus' journey.
- Provide a map of Jerusalem for viewing the placement of the sheep gate near the temple, as well as the Pool of Bethesda just north-east of that.
- Have a "wheelbarrow race" or a "three-legged race." Discuss the importance of helping others as Jesus helped the lame man.
- Make a jointed puppet, with brads, to illustrate the story.
- Weave a pallet, or bedroll, out of strips of newspaper. Act out the story with the pallets.
- Quiz your students about rules. Provide a list of God's rules for life and a list of made-up rules. Have your students circle the rules that are from God and put an "X" through the made-up rules. Talk about the importance of following God and being careful to know what the Bible says without adding anything to it.
- For older children: Bethesda means "house of mercy." Discuss the mercy, unmerited favor, Jesus showed to the lame man by healing him, out of all the others, after having been there for 38 years with no real evidence that he wanted to get well.
- If you have access to a list of Jewish Sabbath laws, you might want to review a few with your students, and talk about whether or not they line up with God's Word.
- For younger children: Reconstruct the Pool of Bethesda in your Bible study area. Use building blocks and a blue tarp (to resemble water). Re-enact this week's story.