

Family • Faith • Holy Spirit • Mission

2025. 1.

Embracing the members with a shepherd's heart

Small Group Preview

Jesus community where God's kingdom is realized on this earth

2024. 1. 5. Bothell Campus Gym 2pm



시애틀형제교회
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEATTLE

To the Small Group Leaders

Mission On Plus, Church Building Churches

The new year of 2025 has arrived. This year, we begin with the expectation that our God will pour abundant grace upon our church and fill us with His dreams. Looking back on the past year, we can see that God has done amazing things. Many outreach teams, both domestically and internationally, went out to spread the gospel. Through the mission conference, we invited the missionaries sent by our church, and we had a festival of renewal as the church, which came through missions, was filled with joy. As a historian once said, "You know as much as you see, and you love as much as you know," this became a reality within our church community. We give thanks and glory to God, who has accomplished all of this history.

This year, our church is moving forward to become a community that looks at missions more deeply, more broadly, and farther away. In 2025, our church community will declare, "Mission On Plus, a church that builds churches." Last year, God used our community to bring the gospel to many mission fields and churches. Now, our church community is moving on to the next phase. It is not only about preaching the gospel, but also preparing (equipping) others to preach the gospel as well. Through various outreaches, we believe that many churches of God, both domestically and abroad, will be revived and strengthened through our church community.

We must view missions not as just one of many church ministries but as the foundation and core of all ministries. We hope that the great commission, the command from the Lord to "go and make disciples of all nations," will be revealed through every ministry of our church. As we begin this year, let us pray that this will be a year in which I, my family, and our group of brothers and sisters will be gloriously used for missions and the kingdom of God. And this year, let us join hands and run toward the great mission history that God is calling us to.

Servant in Christ, **James Kwon**



Embracing the members with a shepherd's heart

Small Group Preview

Small Group Usage

| Living Life Weekly Bible Study 2, January 6th Scripture, P180 |

Ice Breakers

Share a story related to road signs that you've experienced.

Examine God's Word

Please read John 2:1-12 together. Mark with circles or underlines the repeated words or expressions that contain important meanings.

Understand Setting

The Apostle John recorded various miracles of Jesus. The other Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—record these miracles in the order of time, from the same perspective. However, John expressed the amazing works of Jesus not with the word 'miracle,' but with the word 'sign.' This means that these events are not just amazing occurrences, but like an Exit sign on the road, they point toward something real. The purpose that John wanted to convey through these signs is that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior (John 20:31). Please read the seven signs mentioned by John. Today, we will focus on the first sign among these in our meeting.

The Seven Signs Recorded in the Gospel of John

- The sign of turning water into wine (John 2:1-11)
- The sign of healing the royal official's son (John 4:46-54)
- The sign of healing the invalid who had been ill for 38 years (John 5:1-15)
- The sign of feeding five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish (John 6:5-14)
- The sign of walking on water on the Sea of Galilee (John 6:16-24)
- The sign of healing a man born blind (John 9:1-7)
- The sign of raising Lazarus, who had been dead for four days (John 11:1-45)

Meditate the Text

1-1 **Observation** What sign did Jesus perform at a wedding feast in the region of Cana in Galilee? (John 2:7-9)

1-2 Application If we believe that Jesus is the creator, the Lord, and the provider of all things, how would my attitude in prayer and life change?

2-1 Observation The master of the banquet tasted the wine that had been turned from water and praised the bridegroom. Who knows where the wine came from? (John 2:9-10)

2-2 Application Please share a time where you obeyed Jesus' words and you gained a truth that you came to know or a spiritual benefit that you gained.

Review the Text

The Apostle John arranged the seven signs in the Gospel of John to record that Jesus is the Savior who came according to God's promise. In the first sign, Jesus went to a wedding feast in Cana and turned water into wine. For the Jews at that time, weddings were very important, and wine symbolized joy and blessing in the feast. In a very awkward situation where the wine had run out, Jesus performed a sign and provided what was needed for the wedding feast. According to the Apostle John, through this sign, the disciples believed in Jesus (John 2:11). As the Apostle John intends, through the listed signs, we must firmly hold on to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior.

Pray through the Text

- 1 Let us believe that Jesus is the Creator, and may we rely solely on Jesus.
- 2 Lord, please give strength and be with the members who are going through various difficult times.



Embracing the members with a shepherd's heart

Small Group Preview

Leader Usage

Living Life Weekly Bible Study 2, January 6th Scripture, P180

Ice Breakers

Share a story related to road signs that you've experienced.

Connector Just as the road signs provide us with the necessary information to reach our destination, the Apostle John introduces Jesus Christ to us through the seven signs. Through the first sign, we come to know Jesus.

Examine God's Word

Please read John 2:1-12 together. Mark with circles or underlines the repeated words or expressions that contain important meanings.

NIV	GOD'S WORD	ESV
<p>1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Woman,[a] why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[b] 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,</p>	<p>1 Three days later a wedding took place in the city of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had been invited too. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They're out of wine." 4 Jesus said to her, "Why did you come to me? My time has not yet come." 5 His mother told the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Six stone water jars were there. They were used for Jewish purification rituals. Each jar held 18 to 27 gallons. 7 Jesus told the servers, "Fill the jars with water." The servers filled the jars to the brim. 8 Jesus said to them, "Pour some, and take it to the person in charge." The servers did as they were told.</p>	<p>1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it.</p>

9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

9 The person in charge tasted the water that had become wine. He didn't know where it had come from, although the servers who had poured the water knew. The person in charge called the groom

10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the best wine first. When people are drunk, the host serves cheap wine. But you have saved the best wine for now."

11 Cana in Galilee was the place where Jesus began to perform miracles. He made his glory public there, and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this, Jesus, his mother, brothers, and disciples went to the city of Capernaum and stayed there for a few days.

9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom

10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now."

11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Understand Setting

The Apostle John recorded various miracles of Jesus. The other Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—record these miracles in the order of time, from the same perspective. However, John expressed the amazing works of Jesus not with the word 'miracle,' but with the word 'sign.' This means that these events are not just amazing occurrences, but like an Exit sign on the road, they point toward something real. The purpose that John wanted to convey through these signs is that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior (John 20:31). Please read the seven signs mentioned by John. Today, we will focus on the first sign among these in our meeting.

The Seven Signs Recorded in the Gospel of John

- The sign of turning water into wine (John 2:1-11)
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- The sign of raising Lazarus, who had been dead for four days (John 11:1-45)

Meditate the Text

1-1 **Observation** What sign did Jesus perform at a wedding feast in the region of Cana in Galilee? (John 2:7-9)

When the important wine ran out at the wedding feast, Jesus performed the miracle of turning water into wine. Jesus instructed the servants to fill six stone jars with water, and when the servants brought it to the master of the banquet, he praised the wine greatly.

Explanation Cana was located not far from Nazareth, where Jesus lived, and Mary, Jesus, and the disciples were invited to a wedding there. It is possible that Mary's family were close friends or relatives, as Mary expressed concern and responsibility about the wine running out.

From a cultural perspective at the time, wine symbolized joy and abundance at a feast. According to the Old Testament, a wedding feast lasted about a week, and the person preparing the wedding feast had to consider the number of guests when preparing the wine. The fact that the wine ran out shortly after the wedding feast began indicates that it was a very awkward situation.

1-2 **Application** If we believe that Jesus is the Creator, the Lord, and the Provider of all things, how would my attitude in prayer and life change?

Explanation Today's passage shows that Jesus is the Creator and the Provider. Personally, when I have prayer requests at home, I should bring them as they are to Jesus, the Creator and Provider. Just as Jesus did not ignore Mary's request, He will not ignore the prayers we offer and will respond to them kindly.

2-1 **Observation** The master of the banquet tasted the wine that had been turned from water and praised the bridegroom. Who knew where the wine came from? (John 2:9-10)

The people who knew where the wine came from were Mary, the disciples, and the servants.

Explanation Mary informed Jesus that the wine had run out and asked for help. In response, Jesus addressed her as 'Woman.' Culturally, this is a formal and polite expression, indicating a respectful distance, and it is not a rude expression. The reason for this is that Mary had placed Jesus in a situation where He was expected to perform a miracle. This expression suggests that Jesus may have seen the timing of His public ministry differently.

However, despite the somewhat distant expression from Jesus, Mary told the servants to do whatever He told them to do. As the servants obeyed Jesus' words, the miracle of turning water into wine occurred.

2-2 Application

Please share a time where you obeyed Jesus' words, you gained a truth that you came to know or a spiritual benefit that you gained.

Explanation

Please share the grace you have received personally through obedience to God. Obedience is a channel through which we experience God's power. Cognitively, it is accepting something when we fully understand it through reason. However, even when it is unseen or does not make sense, accepting and following God's word is obedience.

Review the Text

The Apostle John arranged the seven signs in the Gospel of John to record that Jesus is the Savior who came according to God's promise. In the first sign, Jesus went to a wedding feast in Cana and turned water into wine. For the Jews at that time, weddings were very important, and wine symbolized joy and blessing at the feast. In a very awkward situation where the wine had run out, Jesus performed a sign and provided what was needed for the wedding feast. According to the Apostle John, through this sign, the disciples believed in Jesus (John 2:11). As the Apostle John intends, through the listed signs, we must firmly hold on to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior.

Pray through the Text

- 1 Let us believe that Jesus is the Creator and the Provider, and may we rely only on Jesus.
- 2 Lord, please give strength and be with the members who are going through various difficult times.

Word Studies

Verse 1 **Wedding in Galilee Cana** Cana was located not far from Nazareth, where Jesus lived, and Mary, Jesus, and the disciples were invited to a wedding there. It is possible that Mary's family were close friends or relatives, as Mary expressed concern and responsibility about the wine running out. "Jewish weddings were important and joyful occasions in the lives of the bride and the groom and their extended families, and the entire community joined in the celebration.¹⁰ Cana was not far from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth (less than ten miles), and the fact that the guest list included Jesus and his disciples as well as his mother may indicate the wedding of a close family friend or relative.¹¹ This may also explain why Jesus' mother felt responsible to help when the hosts had run out of wine." _Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 70.

Verse 3 **Wine was gone** From a cultural perspective at the time, wine symbolized joy and abundance at a feast. According to the Old Testament, the wedding feast lasted about a week, and the person preparing the wedding had to consider the number of guests when preparing the wine. This indicates that the wedding had just begun, implying that it was a very awkward situation. "At a cultural level, running out of wine was considered to be a major social faux pas, since the host was responsible to provide the wedding guests with wine for seven days. There may even have been legal obligations." _Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 70.

Verse 4 **Woman, why do you involve me?** Jesus addressed His mother, who spoke about the lack of wine at the wedding feast, by using the third person and saying 'Woman.' Culturally, this is a formal and polite expression, indicating a respectful distance, and it is not a rude expression. The reason for this is that Mary had placed Jesus in a situation where He was expected to perform a miracle. This expression suggests that Jesus may have had a different view of the timing of His public ministry. "Jesus' address of his mother as "woman" (γύναι, gynai) sounds brusque (Ridderbos 1997: 105); at the very least, it establishes polite distance. Yet the expression, while not particularly endearing, need not be harsh." _Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 72.

Verse 5 **Do whatever He tells you** Despite Jesus' somewhat distant expression, Mary told the servants to do whatever Jesus said. This indicates that Mary had trust in Jesus even in her everyday life. "Despite her son's cool response, Jesus' mother is not to be deterred. Though she realizes that Jesus will do what he thinks best, she also expects that he will act on her behalf. Though she does not have authority over Jesus, she does express her faith." _Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 73.

Verse 6 **Six Stone water jar for ceremonial washing** There were six stone jars in the wedding feast hall or courtyard. These were used for washing the utensils needed for the wedding feast or for washing the guests' hands. In the writings of John, the number 7 represents completeness, while the number 6 represents incompleteness, so the six stone jars may be an indication of an incomplete situation.

"This may have involved the washing of certain utensils used at the wedding and the washing of the guests' hands (cf. Mark 7:2-5; more broadly, John 3:25; see Deines 1993: 247-75, esp. 274)." _Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 72.

Verse 10 **You have saved the best till now** As the servants drew water from the jars and brought it to the master of the banquet, the water turned into wine. At that time, the master of the banquet held a position of influence or honor. After tasting the wine brought by the servants, the master of the banquet remarked on its excellence. This mention of the wine's excellence foreshadows the excellence of Jesus' divinity.

Verse 11 **His disciples believed in Him** The miracle performed by Jesus was known only to Mary, the disciples, and the servants. Jesus demonstrated supernatural acts and excellence in front of His disciples. This suggests that Jesus is the Creator God and the Messiah with power. It is highly likely that the Apostle John heard this story from Mary, and the core of this sign can be summarized as 'the excellence of Jesus, the Messiah.'

"There he performs the first of his startling signs, providing his followers with an initial glimpse of his messianic identity." _ Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 70.



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Small Group Preview

Small Group Usage

| Living Life Weekly Bible Study 3, January 15th Scripture, P182 |

Ice Breakers

Please briefly share your life over the past week and any topics of gratitude.

Examine God's Word

Please read John 5:1-18 together. Circle or underline repeated words or expressions that contain important meanings.

Understand Setting

The Apostle John lists seven signs in the Gospel of John that demonstrate Jesus as the Savior. The first sign is the turning of water into wine (John 2:1-11). The second sign is the healing of the nobleman's son when he was about to die (John 4:46-54). The third sign is the healing of the man who had been paralyzed for 38 years (John 5:1-15). After this, there are four more signs. Through these signs, the Apostle John shows that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior sent by God. Today, we will look at the sign where Jesus healed the man who had been living as a sick person for 38 years, hopeless by the pool of Bethesda.

Meditate the Text

1-1 **Observation** What are the three things Jesus said to the man who had been ill for 38 years? (John 5:6, 8, 14)

.....

1-2 **Application** If you have had an experience where the Lord met you and restored you when you were in a vulnerable or weak situation, please share it.

.....

2-1 Observation What day was it when Jesus healed the man who had been ill for 38 years, and what did the Jews say to the man who was healed? (John 5:9-10)

2-2 Application Even though Jesus knew that He would be a sign to the Jews, He healed the man on the Sabbath. If I were in Jesus' situation, what would I have done?

Review the Text

Jesus intentionally went to the Bethesda pool next to Jerusalem, where a man who had been suffering for 38 years was. The man thought he could be healed by entering the pool when it stirred, but Jesus healed him with His word, showing that He is the true Restorer and Savior. Although Jesus healed the man who had been suffering for a long time, the Jews could not accept that Jesus healed him on the Sabbath and opposed Him. However, through this event, the disciples came to believe that Jesus is the healing God and the God of salvation. Jesus comes into our lives, heals our weaknesses, and is the true Savior who saves us.

Pray through the Text

- 1 May I firmly hold on to the truth that only Jesus is the true Healer and Savior.
- 2 May God heal and comfort the saints in my family, household, and fellowship who are suffering from illness and accidents.



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Please read John 5:1-18 together. Circle or underline repeated words or expressions that contain important meanings.

NIV	GOD'S WORD	ESV
<p>1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.</p> <p>2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda[a] and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.</p> <p>3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.</p> <p>[4] [b] 5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.</p> <p>6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"</p> <p>7 "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."</p> <p>8 Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."</p> <p>9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,</p>	<p>1 Later, Jesus went to Jerusalem for a Jewish festival.</p> <p>2 Near Sheep Gate in Jerusalem was a pool called Bethesda in Hebrew. It had five porches.</p> <p>3 Under these porches a large number of sick people—people who were blind, lame, or paralyzed—used to lie.</p> <p>[a] 5 One man, who had been sick for 38 years, was lying there.</p> <p>6 Jesus saw the man lying there and knew that he had been sick for a long time. So Jesus asked the man, "Would you like to get well?"</p> <p>7 The sick man answered Jesus, "Sir, I don't have anyone to put me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I'm trying to get there, someone else steps into the pool ahead of me."</p> <p>8 Jesus told the man, "Get up, pick up your cot, and walk."</p> <p>9 The man immediately became well, picked up his cot, and walked.</p> <p>That happened on a day of rest—a holy day.</p>	<p>1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.</p> <p>2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.</p> <p>3 In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.</p> <p>4</p> <p>5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.</p> <p>6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"</p> <p>7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me."</p> <p>8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk."</p> <p>9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.</p>

10 and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

11 But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

12 So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

13 The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

15 The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him.

17 In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."

18 For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

10 So the Jews told the man who had been healed, "This is a day of rest—a holy day. You're not allowed to carry your cot today."

11 The man replied, "The man who made me well told me to pick up my cot and walk."

12 The Jews asked him, "Who is the man who told you to pick it up and walk?"

13 But the man who had been healed didn't know who Jesus was. (Jesus had withdrawn from the crowd.)

14 Later, Jesus met the man in the temple courtyard and told him, "You're well now. Stop sinning so that something worse doesn't happen to you."

15 The man went back to the Jews and told them that Jesus was the man who had made him well.

16 The Jews began to persecute Jesus because he kept healing people on the day of rest—a holy day.

17 Jesus replied to them, "My Father is working right now, and so am I."

18 His reply made the Jews more intent on killing him. Not only did he break the laws about the day of rest—a holy day, but also he made himself equal to God when he said repeatedly that God was his Father.

10 So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed."

11 But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'"

12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'"

13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.

14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."

15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Understand Setting

In the Gospel of John, the Apostle John presents seven signs that reveal Jesus as the Savior. The first sign is when Jesus turned water into wine (John 2:1-11). The second sign is when Jesus healed the royal official's son who was near death (John 4:46-54). The third sign is when Jesus healed a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15). There are four other signs that follow. Through these signs, the Apostle John emphasizes that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior sent by God. Today, we will look at the

third sign, where Jesus healed the man who had lived as a cripple for 38 years by the pool of Bethesda.

Meditate the Text

1-1 **Observation** What are the three things Jesus said to the man who had been ill for 38 years? (John 5:6, 8, 14)

Jesus said, "Do you want to get well? Get up, pick up your mat and walk. See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

Explanation Jesus went to Bethesda, which is near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. The word "Bethesda" means "house of mercy" in Hebrew. There were five colonnades at this place. Since the weather was hot during the day, people in Israel often built colonnades around the pool to rest there. The Apostle John introduces a man who had been lying there for 38 years. In the first century, the average life expectancy for men was around 40 years, so this man had lived his life in despair, begging for survival. Jesus went to him.

After healing the man, Jesus told him not to sin anymore, so that nothing worse would happen to him. The phrase "something worse" should not simply be understood as a warning about more severe illness due to sin, but as a warning about "eternal judgment" for sin. In other words, Jesus was cautioning him to avoid sin so that he would not face eternal punishment. (Köstenberger, John in BECNT, 119).

1-2 **Application** If you have had an experience where the Lord met you and restored you when you were in a humble or weak situation, please share it.

Explanation In verse 7 of the passage, the sick man says, "There is no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred." The word "someone" is expressed in the masculine, singular, objective case. Therefore, he is saying that if there is just that one person to help him into the pool when the water moves, he would be healed, but that person is not there. It is likely that this man had no family or friends to care for him, and he was in a hopeless, isolated situation. Jesus went to find this man who was in despair, showing that He is the good Shepherd who comes to us even when we are in despair.

2-1 **Observation** What day was it when Jesus healed the man who had been ill for 38 years, and what did the Jews say to the man who was healed? (John 5:9-10)

That day was the Sabbath, and the Jews said that it was not right for the man to pick up his mat and walk on the Sabbath.

Explanation At that time, carrying one's mat on the Sabbath became a major issue. The Jews had additional rules to ensure strict observance of the Law. One of these rules, found in *Shabbat* 7:2, prohibited moving one's mat from one place to another on the Sabbath ("from one domain into another" m. *Šabbat*. 7.2). The reason was that carrying a mat was seen as a form of work, which was forbidden on the Sabbath. The Jews did not understand the true meaning of the Sabbath and opposed Jesus.

2-2 **Application** **Even though Jesus knew that He would be a sign to the Jews, He healed the man on the Sabbath. If I were in Jesus' situation, what would I have done?**

Explanation Among Jewish rabbis, there was agreement on the idea that "God works even on the Sabbath." They acknowledged that God governs the entire world, and therefore, God's work continues. However, since God is not like humans, He does not become tired or weary, even if He works on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was given for the benefit of humanity. Therefore, the time we observe on the Lord's Day should be used for loving God and loving our neighbors.

Review the Text

Jesus intentionally went to the pool of Bethesda near Jerusalem, where He found a man who had been suffering for 38 years. The man believed that he could be healed if he entered the pool when the waters stirred, but Jesus healed him with His word, demonstrating that He is the true Restorer and Savior. Even though Jesus healed the man who had suffered for so long, the Jews could not accept that Jesus healed him on the Sabbath and opposed Him. However, through this event, the disciples came to believe that Jesus is the God of healing and the God of salvation. Jesus comes into our lives to heal our weaknesses and to be our true Savior.

Pray through the Text

- 1 May I firmly hold on to the truth that only Jesus is the true Healer and Savior.
- 2 May God heal and comfort the saints in my family, household, and fellowship who are suffering from illness and accidents.

Word Studies

Verse 1 Jewish Festival All Jewish men were required to go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices during the three major festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Therefore, the feast mentioned in the passage is likely one of these three festivals, with a high probability that it refers to the Feast of Tabernacles. This is because the Passover was already mentioned in John chapter 2, and historical sources from the first century show that the Feast of Tabernacles was traditionally referred to as "the feast" in the way it is described in this passage.

"Tabernacles may be suggested by the fact that some MSS have "the" festival of the Jews, the conventional name for Tabernacles." _Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 117.

Verse 2a Sheep Gate in Jerusalem During the time of Jesus, there were several gates through which people entered Jerusalem. One of these gates, called the Sheep Gate, was used for the entry of sacrificial lambs and other livestock into the temple. These animals were likely washed and purified at the nearby Pool of Bethesda, which was located in front of this gate. This gate and the pool played an important role in the purification process for the sacrifices that would be offered in the temple.

Verse 2b Bethesda The word "Bethesda" in Hebrew means "House of Mercy." There were five colonnades (porticos) around the pool. In ancient Israel, due to the hot weather during the day, people would often rest in these colonnades by the pool. According to historical records, it is believed that the pool of Bethesda was built by King Herod the Great, who ruled the region during the time of Jesus' birth. This pool was likely a place of healing, and people gathered there in hope of receiving a miracle when the waters were stirred.

"The five colonnades may have been erected by Herod the Great (Hengel 1999: 310–12). ... There, invalids could lie and be partially protected from the weather." _Andreas J. Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 198.

Verse 4 Angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters In the passage, John mentions that sometimes an angel would come down and stir the water, and the first person to enter the pool after the stirring would be healed. However, the verses 3 and 4 are enclosed in parentheses, which suggests that these details may not have been directly written by the Apostle John. It is likely that this passage reflects the thoughts or beliefs of people at the time, as it may have been added during the transcription of the scripture. Some English translations of the Bible do not include these verses.

This is because no references in traditional Jewish texts confirm the idea that the Pool of Bethesda had healing powers. Scholars suggest that the stirring of the water could have been caused by natural occurrences, such as underground springs rising or the water draining. Despite the lack of confirmation in religious writings, many sick and desperate people likely gathered at this pool, clinging to the hope of receiving healing.

Verse 6 Jesus knew the man had this condition for a long time The Apostle John introduces this man as someone who had been lying there for 38 years. Since the average life expectancy for men in the 1st century was about 40 years, it can be inferred that this man had spent almost his entire life in despair, suffering and begging.

Verse 7 I have no one to help me into the pool The term "person" in the phrase "the person who puts me into the pool" is expressed in the masculine, singular, and objective case. Therefore, it means that there was only one person, and if that one person were present, the man would be able to enter the pool when the water stirred. However, that person was not there. It is highly likely that this man was in a desperate situation, without anyone to care for him—no family or friends—alone. Jesus went to find this man who was in such despair, with no one to help him.

Verse 14 Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you This word should not simply be understood as a warning about a more severe illness resulting from sin, but rather as referring to the "eternal judgment" for sin. In other words, Jesus was cautioning the man to avoid sin so that he would not face eternal judgment.

In the present instance, moreover, the "something worse" that Jesus threatened probably refers not to a worse physical condition at all but rather to eternal judgment for sin (cf. John 5:22–30). _ Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 119.

Verse 16 Sabbath At that time, carrying one's mat on the Sabbath became a significant issue. The Jews had additional rules set to ensure the proper observance of the Law. One of these rules, found in the tractate *Shabbat* 7:2, stated that on the Sabbath, one could not move their mat from one place to another ("from one domain into another"). This was prohibited because carrying one's mat was seen as a form of labor. The Jews, not understanding the true meaning of the Sabbath, opposed Jesus.

"According to Jewish tradition, however, the man was violating a code that prohibited the carrying of an object "from one domain into another" (m. Šabb. 7.2; in the present instance, his mat). Apparently, it was permissible to carry a bed with a person lying on it, but not one that was empty (m. Šabb. 10.5)." _ Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 119.

Verse 17a My Father At that time, Jews did not call God "Father" casually. However, when Jesus referred to God as His Father, the Jews reacted by accusing Him of blasphemy.

"Jesus' address of God as his "Father" is striking. It would have been highly unusual for a Jew of that day to address God simply as "my Father" without some qualifying phrase such as "in heaven" in order to avoid undue familiarity (Morris 1974: 31–35; Jeremias 1971: 61–67)." _ Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 120.

Verse 17b Work to this very day, and I too am working Among Jewish rabbis, there was an agreement that "God works even on the Sabbath." They recognized that God rules over the entire world, so His work continues. However, because God is not like humans, He does not grow tired or weary, even when working on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was given for the benefit of humans. Therefore, the time we observe on the Lord's Day should be used for loving God and loving our neighbors.

"The consensus among Jewish rabbis was that God does indeed work constantly, but that this does not amount to him breaking the Sabbath. Since the entire universe is his domain, he cannot be charged with transporting an object from one domain to another." _ Köstenberger, BECNT: JOHN, 121.

• Ministry Prayer Request for January •

Major Ministry Schedule

- May the Holy Spirit fill all ministry team leaders with wisdom as they plan and organize their ministries for the new year.
- On Mission Offering Sunday (1/12), may the believers dedicate themselves in faith to participate in God's mission work, and may they go forward as missionaries who are sent.
- Through the New Year Revival Conference (January 13-17), may the entire church be filled with God's Word and the Holy Spirit.
- Protect the spiritual and physical health of Pastor Im Do-gyun, who will lead the revival conference, and pour out a heart of grace and longing for the saints.
- Through the Bible Reading Challenge, may the saints be filled with God's Word.
- Through the France 300 Warriors Prayer Outreach, may many people in French-speaking regions return to the Lord by His grace.
- Grant wisdom to the ministry team and campaign team preparing for Mission On Plus 30 Days, and pour out all the necessary grace.
- Give leadership and wisdom to the cell leaders and cell mothers serving the members, that they may achieve unity.
- May the saints of EW experience abundant grace during worship, and may new families settle well with well-established cells and cell leaders.

Next Generation Prayer Request

- May the Sonlight students experience a time of spiritual growth and renewal in 2025, and through spiritual training, may they experience God's presence more deeply each day and grow in maturity by His grace.
- May the Coram Deo students become prayer partners for each other in the new year and grow together as a community of faith. May they experience the grace of meeting God personally at the retreat from February 15-17.
- May the NEXT students experience a personal encounter with God and grow into a closer relationship with Him during the retreat at Warm Beach Camp from February 15-17.
- May the EW College students experience God and have deep fellowship through His Word.

2025. 1.

Embracing the members with a shepherd's heart

Small Group Preview

Jesus community where God's kingdom is realized on this earth

2024. 1. 5, Bothell Campus Gym 2pm



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