

The Merciful Lord

John 5:1-17

Context (vv. 1-3)

The Setting (vv. 1-2)

This is Jesus' third sign, second trip to Jerusalem, and first sign performed in Jerusalem.

The Vain Superstitions of the Desperate (v. 3)

1. A Picture of Israel (John 1:11)
2. A Picture of All People (John 1:10)

“Here is human religion with all its cumbersome machinery and disappointing ordinances waited on, and the grace of God slighted. Go yonder to India with its myriad temples and sacred Ganges; visit Thibet, the land of praying-wheels; turn and consider the devotees of Mohammed and their holy pilgrimages; come nearer home, and look upon the millions of deluded Papists with their vigils and fasts, their beads and holy water; and then turn in to the religious performances in many of the Protestant churches, and see if there are any differences in the underlying principles which actuate them. They one and all fail, utterly fail, to meet the deep need of the soul. One and all they are unable to put away sin. And, yet, sad to say, they one and all supplant the Christ of God—He is not wanted; He passes by unnoticed.”

- A.W. Pink

The Mercy of Jesus (vv. 5-9)

The Discompassionate Crowd (vv. 5-7)

The Merciful Lord (v. 8)

The whole scenario is set up so that we see the mercy of our Lord:

- Bethesda means “mercy.”
- The Sheep Gate is the place where lambs were brought into the city to the Temple for sacrifice.
- Jesus came to this man to do more than deliver him from his infirmities, but to, more importantly, deliver him from his sin. (v. 14)

The Response of Faith (v. 9)

Jesus and the Sabbath (vv. 10-17)

The Law of the Sabbath (v. 10)

Jeremiah 17:21-22

The Lord of the Sabbath (vv. 11-16)

Sabbath principles taught by Christ:

1. The Sabbath command is for resting, not for doing nothing. (Luke 6:6ff)
There is a false assumption that "rest" is the same thing as "doing nothing."
2. The Sabbath command is for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:24)
After a long week of back-breaking work, the day of rest is a sweet little taste of Eden.
3. The Sabbath command is foreshadowing Christ, and not the final rest itself. (Matthew 12:2)

The Father and the Son (v. 17)

The Father's Work and Rest (v. 17a)

The Son's Work and Rest (v. 17b)