

The Not So Clear Cut Priority

Intro:

1. Sometimes you can get your relationship with the church in the way of your relationship to the Lord.
2. You can get so carried away with the system, the teachings, the procedures or the building that these things dwarf your personal relationship to the Lord.

John 5:1-16

I. v1-5 - This Man's Priority was to Seek Healing

A. He would go where he thought healing would happen.

1. This is much the same as a person going to a Pentecostal Healing Service.
2. What was so special about the Pool of Bethesda?
 - a. **v7 - ILL: Superstition about the angel troubling the water.**
 - b. The pool is actually fed by an underground spring which occasionally sent a few bubbles to the surface causing the mysterious ripples.

B. His condition was hopeless.

1. He was an **invalid** (ασθενούντων) = weak, feeble - someone without strength.
2. He was hopeless. All he could remember his whole adult life was being an invalid.
3. He was frustrated. For 38 years, every time the waters rippled someone always jumped in first.
4. There wasn't anyone willing to help.

II. v6-9 - The Lord's Priority was to Heal People.

A. With the Lord, people always came first!

1. **Matt 4:23** - He would teach in the synagogues, preach the gospel & heal people.
2. **Matt 8:3** - In the process of healing, He touched a leper. Lepers were not supposed to be touched!
3. **Matt 8:16** - He cast out demons.
4. **Matt 12:22** - He healed the blind & the dumb.
5. **Matt 14:36** - People could even just touch the hem of His garment & be healed.
6. **Lk 13:13** - He healed a crippled hump backed woman.
7. **Lk 22:51** - Even while He was being arrested, He healed the ear of Malcus, servant of the High Priest.

B. The Lord's goal for you is for you to grow into His image.

1. **Gen 1:26-27** - Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
2. The word **image** appears 19 times in the OT.
 - a. 4 times it refers to man & woman made in the image of God.
 - b. 1 time it refers to Seth being born in the image of Adam.
 - c. All the rest of the times it refers to idols of pagan "gods".
 - d. **Col 3:9-10** - Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
3. Our goal is to grow back into the image of God again! You do that by making the Lord's priorities your priorities!

III. v9-16 - The Jewish Religious Leaders' Priority was to Obey Rules

A. One of their favorites was the Sabbath Day Law.

1. **Ex 20:8-11** - Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
2. What constitutes work?
 - a. These religious leaders had 39 classifications of what work was - one of which was carrying a burden.
 - b. **Jer 17:19-27** & **Neh 13:15-19** both say carrying a burden is considered work.
 - c. Both passages imply that the loads were heavy & associated with conducting business.
 - d. These religious leaders defined carrying a burden as carrying anything - a pencil, a needle in a robe or even wearing a broach.
3. Disobeying a clear command of the written Law of Moses was punishable by execution!

B. Supposedly - both this man & the Lord broke the Sabbath Day Law!

1. This man carried a burden - his pallet.
2. The Lord practiced medicine by healing a person.
3. But - these critics also did things on the Sabbath Day:
 1. **Jn 7:22-23** - They practiced circumcision if the Sabbath fell on the 8th day.
 2. **Lk 13:11-21** - They watered their animals.
4. Obviously - these leaders were carrying the law too far!
 1. Would they execute a man for carrying his toothbrush?
 2. Here was a man cured of an incurable affliction.
 3. He has been lying at that pool for as long as anyone could remember.
 4. You would have thought that they should have been happy & rejoiced!

C. You can get so wrapped up in playing the church game that you forget about people!

1. It is important what you believe. You do need to get your theological doctrines straight.
2. But let's be reminded why Lord Jesus went to the cross!
3. You may know people who are active church members, serve on committees, work hard for the church - but who don't live consistent Christian lives.

Attending church & being involved in Christian service are not ends in themselves. Their purpose is to stimulate your growth in Christ! A personal walk with the Lord must always be a priority over church stuff. If it isn't - then you are no better off than those Pharisees!