

#7 ^{skipped 2-6} JOHN C 5 Healing of sick man, Sabbath dispute, discourse.

I Introductions and announcements, joys and concerns.

II Prayer.

III Review: The writer of this gospel has selected and organized material to demonstrate that Jesus is Messiah and is introducing the messianic age.

IV Overview: John the evangelist uses an episode of healing to introduce a dispute with Jewish authorities over Sabbath observance. This dispute will smoulder and flare up again in C 7 and 9. The chapter ends with a long discourse: bold assertions about Jesus the Messiah.

V Read Jn 5:1-9. I composed the following expanded dialogue between Jesus and the sick man in 1990 when I was still in medical practice. Paralysis may have an organic cause--syphilis, polio, injury or degenerative-- or non-organic: hysteria, hypochondriasis, neurasthenia, malingering. This dialogue assumes a non-organic paralysis and explores the defence mechanism of the invalid: denial, anger, depression, blaming, projection.

VI Jesus: Do you want to be well?

Man: Do you think I like being sick?
Do you think its fun to be helpless?
I can't get a job. I'm dependent on my friends for food and drink.
What do you think I am?

Jesus: Do you want to be well?

Man: It's not my fault.
My friends won't come and I have no one to help me to the water.
I told them what I thought of them.
What can I do? It's not my fault.

Jesus: Do you want to get well?

Man: You think I'm a sinner, don't you?
You don't care; you so young and healthy.
You just want to criticize.
Well, I went to the doctors and they couldn't diagnose my case either.
They were baffled too, but they didn't say it was my fault.

Jesus: Do you want to be well?

Man: Look at them, pretending to be sick;
Look how fast they move when they want in the water.
Hah! If I could move that fast I'd get a job.
Pretending to be sick and crowding in front of me--
Don't it just make you sick?

Jesus: Do you want to walk?

Man: You think I don't belong here, don't you?
You think I should get out.
That's what these people say:
Go away, you'll never get well.
Go away, this place is too crowded.
One said, "Let's toss him in the pool anyway. He needs a bath."
What's a man to do?

Jesus: Have you tried to walk?

Man: You think I'm faking, don't you?
You think if I really tried I could walk.
That's what my dad said also.
You think I like being like this?
I've really, really tried to walk.

Jesus: Stand up, get your stuff and go.