

THE YEAR OF POPULARITY



From the very beginning of His ministry, the gospels tell of Jesus' mighty works. As we read about each of the miracles, we see Jesus' genuine love for people. His primary concern was always to use His power to help the people out of genuine love and concern for them as individuals. These mighty works also gave evidence that God was present. Nothing attracted more attention than the miracles. The news of the miracles spread like wildfire through every town and village. Wherever Jesus went, the streets were soon lined with those who had need of healing and those who were just curious. Read Matthew 4:23–25 and discuss the extent of Jesus' fame at this time.

THE PEOPLE LOVED AND FOLLOWED JESUS

As you read each of the following accounts, note how the people continually responded to Jesus. First explain the miracles that took place and then discuss the response of the people.

Verses	What Jesus Did	How the People Responded
Mark 1:21–28 Luke 4:31–37		

Mark 1:29–33		
Mark 1:39–45		
Mark 2:1–12		

THE PHARISEES BEGIN TO MURMUR

- Reread Mark 2:1–12. What were the scribes beginning to think among themselves?

- How did Jesus respond to their questions?

THE SABBATH DAY

Two important situations happened on the Sabbath day, which began to stir up the scribes and Pharisees even more. According to Jewish law, the Sabbath was on Saturday, the last day of the week. It was to be a holy day, set aside only for God. No one was to do work of any kind on the Sabbath. The Jews even cooked their food on Friday so they would not have to prepare anything on the Sabbath.

- With this in mind, read Mark 2:23–28 and Luke 6:1–5 and discuss the following.

1. What were the disciples doing?

2. Why were the Pharisees upset at this?

3. What example did Jesus use to rebuke them?

4. What two points did Jesus make in Mark 2:27–28?

- On another Sabbath day shortly thereafter, Jesus entered a synagogue and began teaching. In the synagogue was a man with a withered hand. Read Luke 6:6–7 and explain the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes at this point.

- Now read the passages from Mark 3:1–6 and Luke 6:6–11 and answer the following.

1. What did Jesus cause to happen to the man with the withered hand?

2. How did the Pharisees respond?

3. What lesson was Jesus trying to teach them?

THE POOL OF BETHESDA

About this time the feast of the Passover was again to take place in Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples went again to the Passover celebration. As they went through one of the gates, the sheep gate, into the city, they came to the pool of Bethesda where many sick people were lying. As Jesus approached, He noticed one man in particular.

- Describe the man and what happened to him as specifically as you can as you read John 5:1–9.

The pool of water, cut from a solid rock, is filled by rain. It is about 55 feet in length and 12 feet wide. It is approached by a flight of steps that wind steeply down to the water.

- How does this fact enter into the story of John 5?

Again, the Jewish religious leaders took note of what had happened. They approached the man who had just been healed and began to rebuke him. What did they say to him, and how did he respond?

Verses	What Was Said?	What Was the Response?
10–11		

12-15		
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- Once again, what response came from the religious leaders regarding Jesus? (vs. 16)

- For what two reasons were they so angered at Him according to verse 18?

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MY RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST

We have pointed out the fact in this lesson that Jesus healed people to prove He was the Christ. Obviously this is true; but if that is all we understand about His miracles, then we miss the true meaning of who Jesus is. Jesus healed people because He loved them. Jesus loved the man with the withered hand. He loved the man who had been paralyzed for so many, many years.

The Pharisees loved laws that would not bend. To them, laws and rules were more important than people. The recognition of the Sabbath laws was far more important to them than the people Jesus healed.

And it is true that Jesus could have healed the same people on another day. But He chose the Sabbath to teach this very important lesson. Since it was such an important question for Jesus to raise, you need to ask yourself the same questions. How important are people to you? Are you more interested in helping someone than in guarding your own reputation? Are you willing to befriend someone who needs a friend at the risk of losing other friends?

TEACHER'S LESSON NOTES

THE POOL OF BETHESDA

The Man Who Needed Healing

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The Healer

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- Did not need [] to []
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