

## SCRIPTURE READING FOR FEBRUARY 6, 2022 @ CAPC OAKLAND

John 4: 46-54  
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

<sup>46</sup> [Jesus] returned to *Cana* in Galilee where he had turned the water into wine. In Capernaum there was *a certain royal official* whose son was sick. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus was coming from Judea to Galilee, he went out to meet him and asked Jesus if he would come and heal his son, for his son was about to die. <sup>48</sup> Jesus said to him, "Unless you see **MIRACULOUS SIGNS** and wonders, you won't believe."

<sup>49</sup> The royal official said to him, "Lord, come before my son dies."

<sup>50</sup> Jesus replied, "Go home. Your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and set out for his home.

<sup>51</sup> While he was on his way, his servants were already coming to meet him. They said, "Your son lives!" <sup>52</sup> So he asked them at what time his son had started to get better. And they said, "The fever left him yesterday at about one o'clock in the afternoon." <sup>53</sup> Then the father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son lives." And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. <sup>54</sup> This was **THE SECOND MIRACULOUS SIGN** Jesus did while going from Judea to Galilee.

John 5:1-18  
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

<sup>1</sup> After this there was **A JEWISH FESTIVAL**, and Jesus went up **TO JERUSALEM**. <sup>2</sup> In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate in the north city wall is a pool with the Aramaic name Bethsaida. It had five covered porches, <sup>3</sup> and a crowd of people who were sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed sat there. <sup>5</sup> A certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When *Jesus* saw him lying there, *knowing* that he had already been there a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" <sup>7</sup> The sick man answered him, "Sir, I don't have anyone who can put me in the water when it is

### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

The gospel of John one of the four stories of the good news of Jesus (Gospel means good news) which tells his life, actions, words and mission. It's believed that John's account is the last one written as his retelling of the story reflects considerable theological reflection and uses metaphors and poetic language. One example is the play with light and darkness throughout the story. John's account also contains only seven miracles – or signs as they're called. A symbolic number in Jewish tradition that represents the divine and also recall the days of creation in the foundational story of Genesis.

*Cana*:: This is the second time that Jesus comes to the town of Cana. He was there with his disciples for a wedding in chapter 2 of John. It was there that he did the first miraculous sign – turning water into wine – and that "Jesus revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him." – John 2:10. This sign of wine and wedding invokes the repeated biblical metaphors used for celebration and blessing as well as the image of union and community between the people and God. Could it be that John is saying, "this first miracle makes such community possible...maybe Jesus himself has comes to do with the people."?

*a certain royal official* :: the word here indicates that the man is a servant to the King, most likely Herod the tetrarch of Galilee – often called "king" in the gospels.

**THE SECOND MIRACULOUS SIGN** :: Remember that John structures his gospel telling of Jesus around 7 signs (miracles); as if the life of Jesus is a new creation, or re-creation, of the world – echoing the 7 days of creation described in Genesis 1. This is the second sign, following the turning of water into wine. Curiously both are associated with Cana.

**JEWISH FESTIVAL... TO JERUSALEM** :: Jews were obliged to go to Jerusalem at the three major feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

*Jesus* saw him lying there, *knowing* :: Throughout the gospel John develops the theme of Jesus' extraordinary knowledge of human beings. We see that also in John 2:25 "[Jesus] didn't need anyone to tell him about human nature, for he knew what human nature was."

stirred up. When I'm trying to get to it, someone else has gotten in ahead of me."

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." <sup>9</sup> Immediately the man was well, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was *the Sabbath*.

<sup>10</sup> The Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It's the Sabbath; YOU AREN'T ALLOWED TO CARRY YOUR MAT."

<sup>11</sup> He answered, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

<sup>12</sup> They inquired, "Who is this man who said to you, 'Pick it up and walk?'" <sup>13</sup> The man who had been cured didn't know who it was, because Jesus had slipped away from the crowd gathered there.

<sup>14</sup> Later Jesus found him in the temple and said, "See! You have been made well. Don't sin anymore in case something worse happens to you." <sup>15</sup> The man went and proclaimed to the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the man who had made him well.

<sup>16</sup> As a result, the Jewish leaders were harassing Jesus, since he had done these things on *the Sabbath*. <sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, "My Father is still working, and I am working too." <sup>18</sup> For this reason the Jewish leaders wanted even more to kill him—not only because he was doing away with the Sabbath but also because he called God his own Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- There is a curious response to the signs and wonders of Jesus. Some people are bowled over with amazement and others are not. What do you think that is about?
- The religious leaders seem so concerned with maintaining tradition by keeping the rules that they are unable to see the miraculous thing that happens right in front of them. When in your life have you struggled to see what was happening right in front of you because it didn't fit into your expectations??
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word of scripture?

#### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

*the Sabbath*:: The sabbath (the 7<sup>th</sup> day from Friday at sunset to Saturday at Sunset) was to be a day of rest and worship according to the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment as recorded in Deuteronomy 5:12-15. "<sup>12</sup> Keep *the Sabbath day* and treat it as holy, exactly as the Lord your God commanded: <sup>13</sup> Six days you may work and do all your tasks, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a *Sabbath* to the Lord your God. Don't do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your oxen or donkeys or any of your animals, or the immigrant who is living among you—so that your male and female servants can rest just like you. <sup>15</sup> Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, but the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That's why the Lord your God commands you to keep *the Sabbath day*."

YOU AREN'T ALLOWED TO CARRY YOUR MAT :: to help understand the limits of the sabbath regulation to not work, the religious teachers (rabbis) had developed exact definitions of what was work and what wasn't. These are related in the Mishna – subsequent writings that are intended to flesh out the grey areas that aren't defined in the Torah and Tanak (Hebrew Scriptures.). The man carrying his mat from one place to another is forbidden as "work" in Mishnah Shabbat 7:2. And carrying one's empty bed (as the mat was his bed) is strictly forbidden in Mishnah Shabbat 10:5. While it can seem ridiculous to us to be so precise, it was important for the people to know if and how they were worshipping God by observing the Sabbath in their intent to live holy lives.

Tragically in this story the religious authorities have lost sight of the miraculous healing and importance of life to God, they focus only on the Sabbath violation without seeming to connect the liberation of the now healed man with that spoken of in Deuteronomy 5:15.