



the  
gospel  
of

# JOHN

part two: *can He be trusted?*

# PART TWO: W1 READING PLAN

## STUCK

WEEK OF MONDAY, APRIL 20TH, 2026  
THROUGH SUNDAY APRIL 26, 2026

# JOHN 5:8-9

# SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON AND MEMORIZE THIS WEEK

*“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.’ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.”*

**JOHN 5:8-9**

Spend a few minutes each day repeating this verse aloud slowly. Ask the Lord to make it true in you, not merely known by you.

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# JOHN

*can He be trusted?*

# WEEKLY SUMMARY

WEEK OF MONDAY, APRIL 19TH, 2026 THROUGH SUNDAY, APRIL 26TH 2026

## STUCK

John 5 takes us into one of the saddest scenes in the Gospel. A man has been disabled for thirty-eight years. Day after day, he lives in the same place, around the same pool, with the same disappointment and the same unanswered longing. He is not only physically limited. He has been shaped by years of waiting, watching, and losing hope. By the time Jesus speaks to him, his whole response to life has been formed by what has not changed. That is why this chapter speaks so directly to people who have lived with something difficult for so long that it has started to feel normal.

This week's readings follow that movement carefully. We will watch Jesus step into a world full of disappointment and asks a question that reaches deeper than physical healing: "Do you want to get well?" We will see how easily people begin to organize life around brokenness, how quickly the heart learns to explain why things never change, and how Jesus confronts not only pain but the deeper emptiness beneath it. John 5 shows that the man at Bethesda needed more than a better opportunity. He needed Jesus.

The chapter also refuses to stop at relief alone. Jesus later finds the man again in the temple and speaks to him about the condition of his soul. God's kindness toward us is not sentimental or shallow. The miracle matters, but it is not the finish line. Jesus came to do more than ease pain. He came to make people whole. As you move through this week, let this chapter search you honestly. Notice the places where pain has become familiar, where prolonged frustration has shaped your expectations, and where you may be asking for relief without surrender. Then hear again the voice of Jesus calling you to rise.

# MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026

## *When Brokenness Starts to Feel Normal*

### READ

John 5:1-6; Psalm 13; Lamentations 3:19-26; Mark 9:20-24; Romans 8:18-25

### REFLECT

John places Jesus at the pool of Bethesda among a great number of disabled people, and then brings one man into focus. He had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. That kind of prolonged suffering reshapes a life. It does not simply hurt. It teaches the body, mind, and soul how to live with diminished expectations. A person can be in the same condition for so long that the condition begins to feel like identity. By the time Jesus approaches this man, his whole world has been formed by years of waiting and disappointment.

This is one of the ways brokenness works in all of us. A struggle, wound, habit, sorrow, fear, or pattern can remain in place long enough that we stop picturing anything different. We adapt to the pain. We adjust our hopes downward. We tell ourselves this is just how life is going to be. Jesus' question reaches directly into that place. "Do you want to get well?" He does not ask because He is uninformed. He asks because He is confronting the deadened imagination that long suffering can produce. The Lord still comes to people who have grown used to living near the pool and asks whether they are ready to hope again.

### QUESTIONS

- What has felt broken in your life for so long that it now feels normal?
- Where have you stopped imagining that God could do something new?

# TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026

## *More Than an Explanation*

### **READ**

John 5:6–7; Exodus 3:7–8; Psalm 142; Jeremiah 17:5–8; Luke 18:35–43

### **REFLECT**

When Jesus asks the man whether he wants to get well, the man does not answer yes. He gives an explanation. He has no one to help him into the pool. Someone always gets there first. He has learned how to narrate his disappointment. He knows the reasons healing has not happened. He knows the barriers. He knows the pattern. His answer reveals a life that has been shaped not by expectation but by repeated frustration. He can describe what is wrong with great clarity, but he cannot yet speak as someone who expects mercy to move.

This is a familiar spiritual condition. It is possible to become highly fluent in what has gone wrong without living with much hope for what God may still do. We can become experts in the story of our obstacle. We know exactly why things have not changed, who failed us, what was missing, and where the process broke down. Jesus is not dismissive of pain, but He does not let our explanations become the final word. Sometimes the first thing that must be interrupted is not the suffering itself, but the exhausted script we have come to believe about our future.

### **QUESTIONS**

- Where in your life have explanations become easier than expectation?
- What story about your situation have you repeated so often that it feels final?

# WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026

## *What Is Missing*

### **READ**

John 5:6–9; John 1:1–4; Psalm 107:17–22; Isaiah 43:18–19; Hebrews 4:12–13

### **REFLECT**

The man at the pool thinks his problem is access. If only someone would help him into the water. If only the timing worked. If only others did not get there first. His response reveals a worldview shaped by a system that has never delivered. Jesus does not improve the system. He does not help the man move closer to the pool. He simply speaks. “Get up. Pick up your mat and walk.” The healing comes not through the pool but through the authority of Christ. Everything the man thought he needed is bypassed by the presence of Jesus.

This is one of the most searching movements in John 5. The man knows what is wrong, but Jesus reveals what is missing. He does not simply need a better arrangement of circumstances. He needs the One who has authority to bring real transformation. Many of us do the same thing in subtler ways. We imagine that peace would come if our environment shifted, if support improved, if timing changed, or if one external barrier were removed. Jesus may indeed work through changing circumstances, but the deepest thing missing in our lives is never merely a more favorable setup. It is Him.

### **QUESTIONS**

- What have you been asking Jesus to change around you while resisting what He wants to change in you?
- Where are you treating external relief as your deepest need instead of Christ Himself?

# THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026

## *Carrying the Mat*

### **READ**

John 5:8-12; Joshua 3:14-17; Psalm 40:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:6-15

### **REFLECT**

Jesus does not only tell the man to rise. He tells him to pick up his mat and walk. The mat had been the visible symbol of his condition. For years it represented helplessness, dependence, and limitation. Now the man carries the very thing that once carried him. The object that had been associated with long disability becomes part of the evidence that Jesus has changed his life. The scene is public, visible, and impossible to ignore.

Grace often works this way. Jesus does not always erase every reminder of what has been hard, but He transforms our relationship to it. What once spoke only of weakness can become part of a testimony. The mat is still there, but it no longer has the same meaning. In Christ, a person can carry what once defined them without being ruled by it. The old reality does not disappear as though it never happened. It is brought under the authority of a new word. The man walks away with the mat in his hands and Jesus' power behind him.

### **QUESTIONS**

- What in your life has felt like a symbol of weakness or limitation?
- How might Jesus be changing the meaning of something that has long defined you?

# FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026

## *Mercy and Resistance*

### READ

John 5:10–13; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6–8; Matthew 12:1–8; Mark 3:1–6

### REFLECT

The healed man's first public interaction after the miracle is not celebration. It is confrontation. The religious leaders are not moved by the restoration of his body. Their attention goes immediately to the mat and to Sabbath regulations. A man who had been stuck for nearly four decades is now walking, and the thing they notice is that he is carrying something on the wrong day. John is not depicting a rejection of God's law, but he is exposing what happens when religion becomes detached from mercy. A framework meant to help people honor God can be twisted into something that no longer rejoices when people are restored.

The heart of Jesus is seen here as clearly as His power. He is not careless about God's holiness. He is revealing what holiness actually looks like when the Father's mercy is at work. Any version of religion that becomes more disturbed by healed people than by human suffering has lost sight of God. The leaders know the rules, but they cannot recognize the beauty of restoration in front of them. John 5 warns us that it is possible to be deeply committed to religious categories and still miss the very heart of God's activity.

### QUESTIONS

- What in your life has felt like a symbol of weakness or limitation?
- How might Jesus be changing the meaning of something that has long defined you?

# SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2026

## *Better Than Relief*

### READ

John 5:14–15; Psalm 51:10–12; Proverbs 4:20–27; Matthew 5:29–30; Hebrews 12:14–17

### REFLECT

Later Jesus finds the man again, this time in the temple. The miracle at the pool was not the end of the story. Jesus says, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” However we work through all the questions surrounding that warning, one truth stands out clearly. Jesus is after more than a healed body. He addresses the man’s life before God. Physical suffering had marked this man for thirty-eight years, but Jesus speaks as though there are deeper realities still at stake.

This is where the chapter presses beyond relief into wholeness. There are worse things than suffering and better things than relief. A person can improve outwardly and still remain far from God inwardly. A body can be healed while the center of life remains untouched. Jesus did not come simply to ease pain. He came to restore people to life under the rule of God. His concern is not less than bodily healing, but it is certainly more. Relief is a gift. Wholeness is greater. Jesus does not settle for the surface when the soul is still in view.

### QUESTIONS

- Have you been wanting Jesus to ease your pain without letting Him lead your life?
- Where have you settled for relief in one area while resisting surrender in the rest of your life?

# SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026

## *The Work of the Father*

### READ

John 5:16–18 Genesis 2:1–3; Isaiah 40:28–31; John 17:1–5; Colossians 1:15–20

### REFLECT

The conflict sharpens when Jesus says, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” This statement reaches far beyond the healing itself. Jesus is not simply defending one action on the Sabbath. He is revealing His identity. His work belongs within the Father’s work. His mercy is not outside the will of God. It is the expression of it. John tells us that the leaders understand the claim clearly enough to respond with greater hostility. Jesus is not behaving like a mere healer. He is speaking and acting in union with the Father.

John 5 leaves us with more than a story about one man by one pool. It leaves us facing the authority of Jesus. The One who asked, “Do you want to get well?” is the same One who shares in the Father’s life-giving work. The One who told the man to rise is the same One who reveals God in the flesh. This is why the chapter belongs in the flow of John’s Gospel so powerfully. Jesus is not merely offering isolated acts of compassion. He is showing us who He is. The question underneath the entire story is not only whether the man can be healed, but whether Jesus can be trusted. John’s answer is yes. What is yours?

### QUESTIONS

- What verse or verses in this chapter most clearly show you who Jesus is?
- Where is Jesus inviting you not only to seek help from Him, but to trust Him fully?