



John 5 - True Holiness

What Does It Mean That God Is Holy?

A Life Group Study on John 5:1-18

Opening Questions (*Choose 2 or 3 of the following*):

- 1) Top 3: Go around and have everyone share their top 3 in a particular category. Categories might include: foods, classes, places you'd like to travel, movies, books, bands, celebrities, tv shows, things you'd bring to a deserted island, secret talents, etc.
- 2) When you get sick, what are you like: a puppy, Superman, or Rip Van Winkle?
- 3) Share about a time when you were really sick. Give all the gory details.
- 4) What's the first word that comes to mind when you hear "Christianity"? What do you think most students at UVM would think of?
- 5) What are some common "rules" associated with Christianity? Which of these "rules" do people find most cumbersome or difficult to keep?

Gospel Story

- 1) Read John 5:1-18.
- 2) How do you picture the setting of this story (vv 2-4)? What is the smell? What are the noises? The atmosphere? How would you feel being in a place like this? Can you think of a similar kind of place in our world or society?
- 3) What does John tell us about the pool in verse 4? What are some common superstitious beliefs that people hold today? Do you hold any superstitious beliefs yourself?
- 4) John tells us this man had been paralyzed for 38 years. Why do you think Jesus asks him, "Do you want to get well?" Wouldn't the answer to this question have been obvious? If you were the paralytic, how would you have felt about such a question?
- 5) What will have to change for this man in order for him to be healed?
- 6) Why do the Jewish leaders get upset with the former paralytic? What do you think motivates these leaders in their anger?
- 7) Why did Jesus break the Sabbath rules? What motivated *him*? What do you think Jesus is trying to communicate about the point of Torah (Bible) reading and observance?
- 8) How did Jesus's understanding of holiness differ from that of the Pharisees/Jewish leaders?

Your Story

- 1) Has your joy in God ever been squashed by someone's concern over religious rituals, traditions, or doctrinal beliefs? Have you ever responded to someone in that way?
- 2) Are there "rules" in Christianity that you struggle to understand? How might this story change your perspective on God's motivations and reasoning for his commandments?
- 3) Scot McKnight, Christian theologian, writes, "Being right for Jesus meant a kind of Bible reading and a kind of theology and a kind of behavior that led to loving God and loving

others. If you read your Bible or prayed or went to Synagogue but weren't a more loving person, something was wrong." (*One.Life*)

Do you agree with this quote? Why or why not?

Based on this story in John's Gospel, how has your understanding of holiness changed? What might it look like for you to be a more holy person living in God's Kingdom?

How can we prevent our faith from 'missing the point'? How do we guard against putting religious observance over loving people?

4) What is an area of your life that Jesus might say, "Do you want to get well?" What might have to change in order to receive 'healing'?