

John 30 – The Third Sign: Healing a Paralytic (Lord of the Sabbath)

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Scripture 1: (Jn. 5:1-16 ESV)

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed.

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One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me."

Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed."

But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'"

They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?"

Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."

The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

Scripture 2: (Exod. 20:8-11 ESV)

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q60. How is the sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, *except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.*

Sermon:

After healing the nobleman's son, John allows some time to pass in his narrative. We understand this because throughout his Gospel, John uses the Jewish religious calendar and its requirements to present a chronological account of Jesus' ministry, whereas the Synoptics lack a strict temporal structure apart from the final week of Jesus' life. {This is why the order of stories and why certain details within stories are different within the Synoptics, because they are not presented chronologically and because (as every good preacher does) it is certain that Jesus repeated Himself, reusing and restating His message, in each town and synagogue that He visited. There were surely multiple examples and instances of Him telling the "Parable of the Soils", while the various points presented within the "Sermon on the Mount" would have also been made and repeated individually and in other settings.}

Previously, the first specific time marker was set when Jesus traveled up to Jerusalem for the Passover (2:13), when He cleared away the money changers and was visited by Nicodemus. After this, He remained near Jerusalem, in Judea for an indeterminate period, before He returning home to Galilee (3:22-4:3). However, He stopped in Samaria for two days (4:40-43) along the way. Then, Jesus was welcomed home to Galilee, and it is strongly implied that He was traveling around the region visiting the different towns (4:46). Now we receive our next time marker, "*After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*"

According to Torah, there were three obligatory feasts held every year, during which all the adult men of Israel were **required** to "...appear before the Lord GOD." (Exodus 23:17, Deuteronomy 16:16 ESV) and, the timing of these feasts was strictly scheduled by God's command. The three Feasts were: the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which occurs immediately following the Passover; the Feast of Harvest (also called the "Feast of Weeks"; Exodus 34:22; {and also known as Pentecost}), which celebrated the first fruits of their labor; and, the Feast of Ingathering, which celebrated the end of the harvest season and corresponded with the Festival of Booths (Tabernacles; Exodus 23:14-17). Since only forty-nine days separated the Feast of Unleavened Bread from the Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:9), it is unlikely that Jesus returned to Galilee between Passover and Pentecost, just to quickly turn around and return to Jerusalem, so it is more likely that the "feast" mentioned by John was the Feast of Tabernacles, which marks the next few events as happening during the Fall.

"*Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.*" We are fortunate that the ruins of this pool have been uncovered in Jerusalem. You will find some pictures of it from my trip to Israel last year printed in your bulletin, because they should be helpful to better understand the scene that John describes.

Bethesda¹ was an important complex during the 1st Century, containing two pools which were used for bathing as well as a water supply for the city. Both pools were deep reservoirs that collected seasonal water, rather than being fed by a nearby spring. The note about "*five roofed colonnades*" is explained by the wall dividing the two pools; where each of the four sides surrounding the complex and the divider each had one of these columned patios. Depending upon the season and the level of the water, traversing the steps down to reach the pool would have been challenging and slow to travel for everyone.

"*In these [colonnades] lay a multitude of invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed.*" The place name of *Bethesda* meant "house of mercy", which made it appropriate for such a crowd to be resting there and for the miracle which Jesus would perform.

"*One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.*"

1 <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/jerusalem/the-bethesda-pool-site-of-one-of-jesus-miracles/>

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me."

Now there are several things happening in this story that we need to be aware of.

To address the elephant in the room, you may or may not have a "Verse 4" printed in your Bible. There is a tradition associated with this site and "Verse 4" that an angel would suddenly stir up the waters and cause the first person who entered the water to mysteriously be healed; however, those particular details are not found in the oldest recovered manuscripts of John, although this superstition is still alluded to by the man's response in verse 7.

We have a man living "in pain". He was an invalid which likely meant that he was considered a burden by others: family, friends, the Temple, or even society in general. The circumstances of this story suggest that he had little to no social support or help. He was "mobility challenged". I expect that all of us can relate with this man, somehow: either by being likewise challenged, or by being friends with or having cared for someone with this difficulty. We all have reasonable ideas about what his thoughts, feelings, and attitudes may have been like. He may have struggled with depression. He was likely fearful about all kinds of things and we wonder: Where were his family or friends, willing to carry him down to put him in the water? Clearly he was alone and almost certainly felt abandoned, by men and by God.

However, this man's presence at the pool was a sign that he had not given up all hope. What kind of hope could he really have had? He was a paralyzed man waiting and hoping to win an impossible race; of going down at least two flights of stairs to reach the water just to have a chance of maybe being healed? At best this was a desperate hope and ultimately, it was a false hope. His hope was misplaced; hoping in an idle superstition.

There is something else about this interaction that is different from Jesus's other acts of healing. This paralyzed man did not ask Jesus to heal him, instead **Jesus** initiated their encounter and offered the man mercy. Jesus responded to the man's pain and need. He was not responding to his request or prayer because the man did not know who Jesus is or what Jesus could (and would) do for him.

- This is a good example in Scripture showing us how God works monergistically; by healing and regenerating our hearts, giving us faith in Him while we do not even know the depth of our need, or have any hope of restoration to wholeness.

Then "Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked."; then Jesus, God the Son: the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*; commanded the paralytic, {Get up, take your stuff, and go.} and so, the man {Got up, grabbed his stuff, and went!}.

Jesus spoke His authoritative, sovereign word while creation and the man, both obeyed. "And God said, 'Let there be...and there was...". The man was healed according to Jesus' divine prerogative. He did not ask for it and he did not deserve it but, in the great mystery of God's grace and mercy, Jesus chose to heal this man because it was His will to do so. But this was not just another miracle of healing, nor was it merely a second example of the power contained within Jesus' spoken word, as it might first seem. The miraculous healing itself was not John's purpose for including this story within his Gospel because the mere fact of the miracle does not show us anything new or different about Jesus as a "Sign". Instead, this miracle established the stage for what happens next; the next Sign of Jesus' divine authority.

“*Now that day was the Sabbath.*”. It’s the “When” that is the key to this story, rather than its “What”. The Sabbath was and is the most important day of the week, yet it is also the most misunderstood. The ancient Jews misunderstood it, and modern Jews misunderstand it whereas, modern Christians, although we understand its **purpose** better (Mark 2:27), we often misapply it.

Let us consider the 4th Commandment, “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.*”. This commandment seems clear, easy, and simple but some of the terms are misunderstood.

The command to “remember” means to “observe” or “keep” the Sabbath as a “holy” day; a day set apart and devoted to the LORD: to rest and worship Him, to honor Him and do what pleases to Him. “Labor” refers specifically to all of a person’s “working”, their specific efforts and doing, while “work” refers to someone’s occupation and employment. However, what we often fail to remember is that the prohibition against “working” does not preclude things that remain ordinarily necessary, like feeding and watering cattle. The 4th Commandment commands two prescriptions: one “to do” and one “not to do”.

1. Do be like God and rest on the Sabbath. The day is given for our good personal benefit, as it creates an opportunity to grow into a closer relationship with our God, thereby gaining good spiritual benefit. If the day is devoted to worship then, in all that we **do**, our hearts and minds should be directed towards God.
2. Do no “work”. Do not labor, or toil, or do “your own thing”. Pause in your busy-ness. Do not do anything for your own specific gain or pleasure and do not make others work for your benefit; preventing the Sabbath rest of others or encouraging them to not keep Sabbath themselves is also prohibited, even if they do not belong to Israel, the Church.
 - However, if working on the Sabbath is **required** by a person’s employer then, although not preferred, we are obligated to work (as a necessity) and we are not guilty of sin for it because we are still faithfully obeying God through our obedience and subjection to our “governing authorities” (Romans 13:1), provided we intentionally take or make time elsewhere for our Sabbath rest.

Simply put, what the Sabbath commands is that the day is to be dedicated to the LORD God and His purposes, rather than ourselves and the satisfaction of our own wants and desires. That is the understanding which the Shorter Catechism conveys in Question 60.

Q60. How is the sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, *except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.*

Jesus explains the implied exception of necessity and mercy in Matthew 12, saying “*Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.*” (Matt. 12:11-12 ESV) because doing necessary or merciful things honor the LORD and are worshipful acts of divine obedience.

Now part of the reason why the Sabbath has been misunderstood or misapplied is because later on, in Exodus when God gives the commandments to Moses a second time, a penalty for Sabbath-breaking is defined. “*You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. **Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death.** Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the*

seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.” (Exod. 31:14-17 ESV).

- The Sabbath was a serious thing in ancient Israel and Sabbath remains just as serious today, even though we no longer apply any penalty for Sabbath-breaking.

The reason we misunderstand and misapply the Sabbath has nothing to do with our not valuing it enough, but because we value it enough to fear unintentionally breaking it and becoming liable to God's judgment and sanction. It was out of great respect for the LORD that additional rules and practices were created to protect the sanctity of the Sabbath and the lives of “accidental” sinners.

However, it is easier to legislate and enforce negative prohibitions than it is to encourage and ensure positive prescriptions. It is easier to stop people from doing something, than it is to make them do something. Thus we all end up doing what we do not want and we fail to do as we ought (Romans 7:18-23). So, while many people might not work on the Sabbath, as we ought, we also fail to do much of the good that we should.

This is where Christians, most frequently misapply the Sabbath:

- too many are willing to abandon the “gathering of saints” [Hebrews 10:24] in favor of other worldly rests and recreations, calling that their “sabbath”; and,
- we should not fear doing something that is good and God honoring because it is Sunday, instead we should seek out the opportunity.

Jesus models the principle of both honoring and worshiping God on the Sabbath by doing good “works” of mercy in this story {and in Matthew 12, Mark 2, and in Luke 6, 13 and 14}, but it is also what gets Him “in trouble” with the religious leaders {just as it does in the Synoptics}. His activity on the Sabbath is John's point because it manifests Jesus' authority as the “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5); an authority which is only rightly claimed by the LORD.

“Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.”

But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'”

They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?"

Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.”

Jesus healed this paralyzed man on the Sabbath but, the man did not know who Jesus was, nor could he find Him later since it was crowded. Meanwhile, the healed man was getting into trouble because he did what Jesus told him to do, because carrying the mat he had been confined to was considered “work” and therefore, a violation of the Sabbath.

We should be shocked, appalled, and disappointed with the people's response, but we should also be cautious before condemning them, because we all risk the same charge of hard hearted-ness and hypocrisy.

- This man had just been the beneficiary of a miracle; he was healed and made whole.

- He was no longer a burden or a drain upon anyone's limited resources.
- He was no longer sitting beside the pool of Bethesda, believing a fools hope.

Yet <qt>“the Jews”</qt> were upset that this man, who had not walked in thirty-eight years, was taking his things and walking home. Clearly, they did not care about him as a person. They did not care that he was healed. They did not care about what he had suffered or how he now felt. Instead, they only cared that he was breaking their socially normative rules; man made rules that were intended to protect the divine mandate of “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*”. However, they were the ones who were breaking the Sabbath because they were refusing to celebrate the fact that a good, godly wonder had just been performed.

Although they thought they were keeping the Sabbath by **not** doing things, they were truly breaking the Sabbath because of the things that they refused to do. They were not doing what the LORD required of them, that they “*do justice...love kindness...and walk humbly with [their] God*” (Micah 6:8).

- These Jews were so afraid of violating the Sabbath, that they could not help but break it.

Then later, “*Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."*”, maybe later that day or perhaps the next week; Jesus found the healed man worshipping in the Temple, rightly praising and thanking God for His great and good providence.

- The first thing we should notice is that the man had a proper response to the mercy and deliverance of God. He gave God the glory!
- The second thing we should notice is that only now, after the man was healed, did Jesus command him to greater obedience and fidelity to God. The man did not deserve to receive this miracle in the first place; it was entirely a product of divine grace and sovereign mercy. This was an act of “Grace alone, through Faith in the LORD, alone”. The man was not healed because he was sinless, but now that he was healed, Jesus expected him to “*be holy*” (Leviticus 19:2) and godly, and also to “Go!” and “*Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to [him].*”. {This last portion “...that nothing worse may happen...” establishes a contrast to the later “Sign” of Jesus healing the 'man born blind' (John 9:32), because it implies here that the man's invalidity was somehow warranted as a form of divine discipline, for some unnamed sin.} Meaning that the further, better, and more complete response to God's gracious and merciful providence is to both glorify and obey Him.
- The third thing we should understand is that Jesus warns him against continuing to sin, “*...that nothing worse may happen...*”. Jesus implies that failure to obey God after having received such mercy, will result in more severe discipline or a harsher judgment because he would have “no excuse”, as Romans 2:10. This same principle was also taught by God's punishing a whole generation of Israel for their disbelief in the wilderness and is reaffirmed by the author of Hebrews, “*For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.*” (Heb. 10:26-27 ESV).
- Fourth and finally, John does not tell us whether or not the man became a follower of Jesus, so we must guess about his motivation next because, after his second encounter with Christ, “*The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.*”. However, there are only two logical reasons:
 1. That he wanted to shift the blame and judgment of his “alleged” sabbath-breaking to Jesus, since he was obeying Jesus' command. Or,

2. That he went to tell them so that they could join him in thanking and praising God for the miracles and wonders that Jesus was doing.

Myself, I am personally inclined to believe and hope that option Number Two was his earnest motivation.

This all goes to show how Jesus, as God the Son: the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*; is the “Lord of the Sabbath”, a title He claims in the Synoptics, but more clearly demonstrates here in John. This sign also emphasized why Jesus received such animosity from the Jews, since John tells us “*And **this** was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.*”. Unfortunately, the Jews were more concerned with their religiosity and their “traditions of men” than they were with maintaining true faith in the LORD and actually obeying Him. This sign highlighted the hypocrisy of their ritualistic Sabbath observations.

- Although they rightly did not do what they should not do – namely, “work”: their labor and their occupation; they failed to do what they should do – namely, acts of justice, charity, and mercy: the things which the LORD desires most.
- This should always be a cautionary reminder for us as well.

Their opposition to Jesus, seeking to bring Him to “justice” on account of His “alleged” Sabbath-breaking, was to their mind a sign of their faithfulness, obedience, and fidelity to the LORD and His Holy, Sovereign Word {little different from Saul of Tarsus in Acts}, yet they were just repeating the mistakes of their forebears; mistakes that were judged and condemned by the prophet Isaiah, “*And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."*” (Isa. 29:13-14 ESV).

- What does this story tell us about the inclination of their heart in the matter of the LORD's Sabbath?

We must also realize that the LORD God is the true “Lord of the Sabbath”. He rested upon it after creating all things. He established it and hallowed it therefore, He cannot violate it; as such Jesus Christ would not and could not break the Sabbath. If Jesus was breaking the Sabbath, then He could not be God. If Jesus was breaking the Sabbath, then He was not righteous and God the Father would not have raised Him from the grave; therefore, Jesus is God.

When we have a proper understanding about the Sabbath:

- that the Sabbath was established for the benefit of man (Mark 2:27);
- that it is intended for God's glory in worship and our relationship with Him; and,
- that we ought to spend the day in activities devoted to Him instead of ourselves (Exodus 20:8-11);

then, we will realize that Jesus did nothing to break the Sabbath in this story: He did not labor or engage in His occupation; He merely spoke, as God, and a man was healed by His authoritative Word.

- Instead of violating the Sabbath prohibition, Jesus lived out the Sabbath prescription by doing works of mercy.

Nor did the former paralytic sin and break the Sabbath by obeying Christ. Jesus commanded him and since Jesus cannot righteously command others to sin, his obedience was not sinful. Furthermore, picking up his mat and walking away became both a necessary and merciful action after Jesus healed him. No reasonable person

can expect that a man that had lived as an invalid for thirty-eight years would continue lying as he had once healed.

{I know you have been trapped like this for a very long time. You are now healed, but you will need to lay here and wait just a few more hours, until the sun goes down, before you may get up and exercise your newfound ability.} I do not think so!

Now we, as Christians, must remember (and so avoid the easy trap of legalism) that our Sabbath, Sunday, is given to us for our good and our benefit. It is not meant to be a burden, but a joy. We should all be less focused upon the “Thou Shalt Not” aspect and more upon the “Thou Shalt Do”. Sunday is all about what we **do differently** from all the rest of the world; although much of what we should be doing differently is a matter of the worldly things that we obediently **do not do**. Regardless, everything we do, everyday, should be done “for the glory of God”, but we must be especially mindful of our Sunday activities: that they are God honoring and God glorifying, instead of honoring or benefiting our sinful selves.

The legalistic complaint about Christian Sabbath-keeping often concerns the idea that we must “...rest the whole day from [our] own works and words, and from thoughts about [our] worldly activities and recreations...” (WCF 21.8), implying that we cannot do anything “fun”, when that has never been the case as understood by the Church, certainly not by the Reformed Church, at least {consider Sabbath keeping in the “Swiss Family Robinson” by Johann David Wyss}. The challenge arises because the adjective of “worldly” is also to be applied to “recreations”.

- Ought we to go to a baseball game or allow our children to play a sports league game on a Sunday?
 - No, because those are ordinary, worldly recreations and activities. Yet, we could rightly play “Catch” with our children, or kick a soccer ball around with our family, or go for a hike and take a walk with our spouse because that builds up healthy and loving relationships within our families and so, is naturally God-honoring. These activities become even better if you also spend the time catechizing, or talking about the sermon and Sunday worship, or by singing hymns.
- Ought we to spend the afternoon catching up on work that we did not finish during our week before?
 - No, but it is a great time for your own personal and private study on the things of God.
- Ought we to plan on going out to eat after worship, every Sunday?
 - Maybe, maybe not. It all depends on your motivation; is it for you or for God? Are you going out to continue your fellowship with Christians, or is it just because you do not want to cook lunch? However, if you choose to go out for lunch after church, then I strongly encourage you to please, always be **extra** charitable to your wait-staff, generous in your gratuity, and present a good Christian witness to them and the diners surrounding you.

Finally, the greatest joy for us in knowing that Christ is “Lord of the Sabbath”, is like that of the paralytic. He was a man enslaved by his sin and his worldliness, but unable to see his taskmaster or recognize his chains, yet Jesus freed him from his bondage for freedoms sake, to enjoy the Lord's rest; He was freed from his laborious work, to rest for Gods glory. Therefore, our continued keeping of the Sabbath is a proclamation of our freedom in God's love and glory, because He wants us to rest and He wants us to honor Him through our works of mercy and justice and love; by helping others to enter into the joy of His rest also.

AMEN

“The Swiss Family Robinson”

by Johann David Wyss

Chapter 4²

Next morning all were early awake, and the children sprang about the tree like young monkeys.

‘What shall we begin to do, father?’ they cried. ‘What do you want us to do, today?’

‘Rest, my boys,’ I replied, ‘rest.’

‘Rest?’ repeated they. ‘Why should we rest?’

‘Six days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast to do, but on the seventh, thou shalt do no manner of work.’ This is the seventh day,’ I replied, ‘on it, therefore, let us rest.’

‘What, is it really Sunday?’ said Jack, ‘How jolly! Oh, I won’t do any work; but I’ll take a bow and arrow and shoot, and we’ll climb about the tree and have fun all day.’

‘That is not resting,’ said I, ‘that is not the way you are accustomed to spend the Lord’s day.’

‘No! But then we can’t go to church here, and there is nothing else to do.’

‘We can worship here as well as at home,’ said I.

‘But there is no church, no clergyman and no organ,’ said Franz.

‘The leafy shade of this great tree is far more beautiful than any church,’ I said, ‘there will we worship our Creator. Come, boys, down with you: turn our dining hall into a breakfast room.’

The children, one by one, slipped down the ladder.

‘My dear Elizabeth,’ said I, ‘this morning we will devote to the service of the Lord, and by means of a parable, I will endeavor to give the children some serious thought; but, without books, or the possibility of any of the usual Sunday occupations, we cannot keep them quiet the whole day; afterward, therefore I shall allow them to pursue any innocent recreation they choose, and in the cool of the evening we will take a walk.’

My wife entirely agreed with my proposal, and having breakfasted, the family assembled round me, as we sat in the pleasant shade on the fresh, soft grass.

After singing some hymns and offering heartfelt prayers to the Almighty Giver of all good, I told the children I would relate to them a parable instead of preaching a sermon.

‘Oh, that would be delightful! I like the parables in the Bible better than anything,’ said Franz. ‘When can we hear you read out of the Bible again, father?’

2 <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3836/pg3836.txt>

'Ah, my little boy, your words reproach me,' returned I. 'While eagerly striving to procure from the ship would feed our bodies and provide for their comfort, I blush to think that I have neglected the Bread of Life, the word of God. I shall search for a Bible on my next return to the wreck: although our own books were nearly all destroyed, I am pretty sure to find one.'

At these words my wife arose, and fetching her magic bag, she drew from it a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which I thankfully received from her hand; and after reading aloud from its sacred pages, I spoke as follows:

'A Great King, ruling in power and splendor over a vast realm of light and love, possessed within its boundaries a desolate and unfruitful island. This spot he made the object of his special care; and, lavishing on it all the varied resources of his might and goodness, it bloomed in beauty, and became the happy residence of a band of colonists, who were charged not only with the cultivation and improvement of the soil, but each, individually, was bound to cherish in his soul the spirit of love and true allegiance to his Sovereign.

'While this faithful union was maintained, the colony flourished; and the noblest virtues exalted and rendered happy the existence of every member of the race.

'That a discontented and rebellious spirit should ever have infected these fortunate subjects of so loving a master, seems incredible, yet it was so; disobedience and pride brought misery and punishment, the fair prospects of the colony were blighted, the labours of the colonists were unblessed, and total separation from the parent kingdom seemed inevitable.

'A message of pardon--of free forgiveness--was nevertheless accorded to these rebels; and to all who, humbly accepting it, molded their future lives to the will of the Great King (now revealed in a character even more gracious than before), was held out the promise of removal at last from among the ruins caused by the great rebellion, to the glory and undimmed splendor of the realm of Light and Blessedness.'

Having interested the children, I then, leaving allegory, pressed simply and earnestly home to each young heart the truths I sought to teach; and, with a short prayer for a blessing on my words, brought the service to a close.

After a thoughtful pause, we separated, and each employed himself as he felt disposed.

I took some arrows, and endeavoured to point them with porcupine quills.

Franz came to beg me make a little bow and arrow for him to shoot with, while Fritz asked my advice about the tiger-cat skin and the cases he was to contrive from it. Jack assisted with the arrow-making, and inserting a sharp spine at one end of each reed made it fast with pack-thread, and began to wish for glue to ensure its remaining firm.

'Oh, Jack! Mamma's soup is as sticky as anything!' cried Franz. 'Shall I run and ask for a cake of it?'

'No, no, little goose! Better look for some real glue in the tool-box.'

'There he will find glue, to be sure,' said I, 'and the soup would scarcely have answered your purpose. But Jack, my boy, I do not like to hear you ridicule your little brother's idea. Some of the most valuable discoveries have been the result of thoughts which originally appeared no wiser than his.'

While thus directing and assisting my sons, we were surprised by hearing a shot just over heads; at the same moment two small birds fell dead at our feet, and looking up, we beheld Ernest among the branches, as bending his face joyfully towards us, he cried, 'Well hit! Well hit! A good shot, wasn't it?'

Then slipping down the ladder, and picking up the birds, he brought them to me. One was a kind of thrush, the other a small dove called the ortolan, and esteemed a very great delicacy on account of its exquisite flavour.

As the figs on which these birds came to feed were only just beginning to ripen, it was probable that they would soon flock in numbers to our trees; and by waiting until we could procure them in large quantities, we might provide ourselves with valuable food for the rainy season, by placing them, when half cooked, in casks with melted lard or butter poured over them.

By this time Jack had pointed a good supply of arrows, and industriously practised archery. I finished the bow and arrows for Franz, and expected to be left in peace; but the young man next demanded a quiver, and I had to invent that also, to complete his equipment. It was easily done by stripping a piece of bark from a small tree, fitting a flat side and a bottom to it, and then a string. Attaching it to his shoulders, the youthful hunter filled it with arrows and went off; looking, as his mother said, like an innocent little Cupid, bent on conquest.

Not long after this, we were summoned to dinner, and all right willingly obeyed the call.

During the meal I interested the boys very much by proposing to decide on suitable names for the different spots we had visited on this coast.

'For,' said I, 'it will become more and more troublesome to explain what we mean, unless we do so. Besides which, we shall feel much more at home if we can talk as people do in inhabited countries: instead of saying, for instance, "the little island at the mouth of our bay, where we found the dead shark", "the large stream near our tent, across which we made the bridge", "that wood where we found cocoanuts, and caught the monkey", and so on. Let us begin by naming the bay in which we landed. What shall we call it?'

'Oyster Bay,' said Fritz.

'No, no!--Lobster Bay,' cried Jack, 'in memory of the old fellow who took a fancy to my leg!'

'I think,' observed his mother, 'that, in token of gratitude for our escape, we should call it Safety Bay.'

This name met with general approbation, and was forthwith fixed upon.

Other names were quickly chosen. Our first place of abode we called Tentholm; the islet in the bay, Shark's Island; and the reedy swamp, Flamingo Marsh. It was some time before the serious question of a name for our leafy castle could be decided. But finally it was entitled Falconhurst; and we then rapidly named the few remaining points: Prospect Hill, the eminence we first ascended; Cape Disappointment, from whose rocky

heights we had strained our eyes in vain search for our ship's company; and Jackal River, as a name for the large stream at our landing place, concluded our geographical nomenclature.

In the afternoon the boys went on with their various employments. Fritz finished his cases, and Jack asked my assistance in carrying out his plan of making a cuirass for Turk, out of the porcupine skin. After thoroughly cleansing the inside, we cut and fitted it round the body of the patient dog; then when strings were sewn on, and it became tolerably dry, he was armed with this ingenious coat of mail, and a most singular figure he cut!

Juno strongly objected to his friendly approaches, and got out of his way so fast as she could; and it was clear that he would easily put to flight the fiercest animal he might encounter, while protected by armour at once defensive and offensive. I determined to make also a helmet for Jack out of the remainder of the skin, which to his infinite delight I speedily did.

Amid these interesting occupations the evening drew on, and after a pleasant walk among the sweet glades near our abode, we closed our Sabbath day with prayer and a glad hymn of praise, retiring to rest with peaceful hearts.



