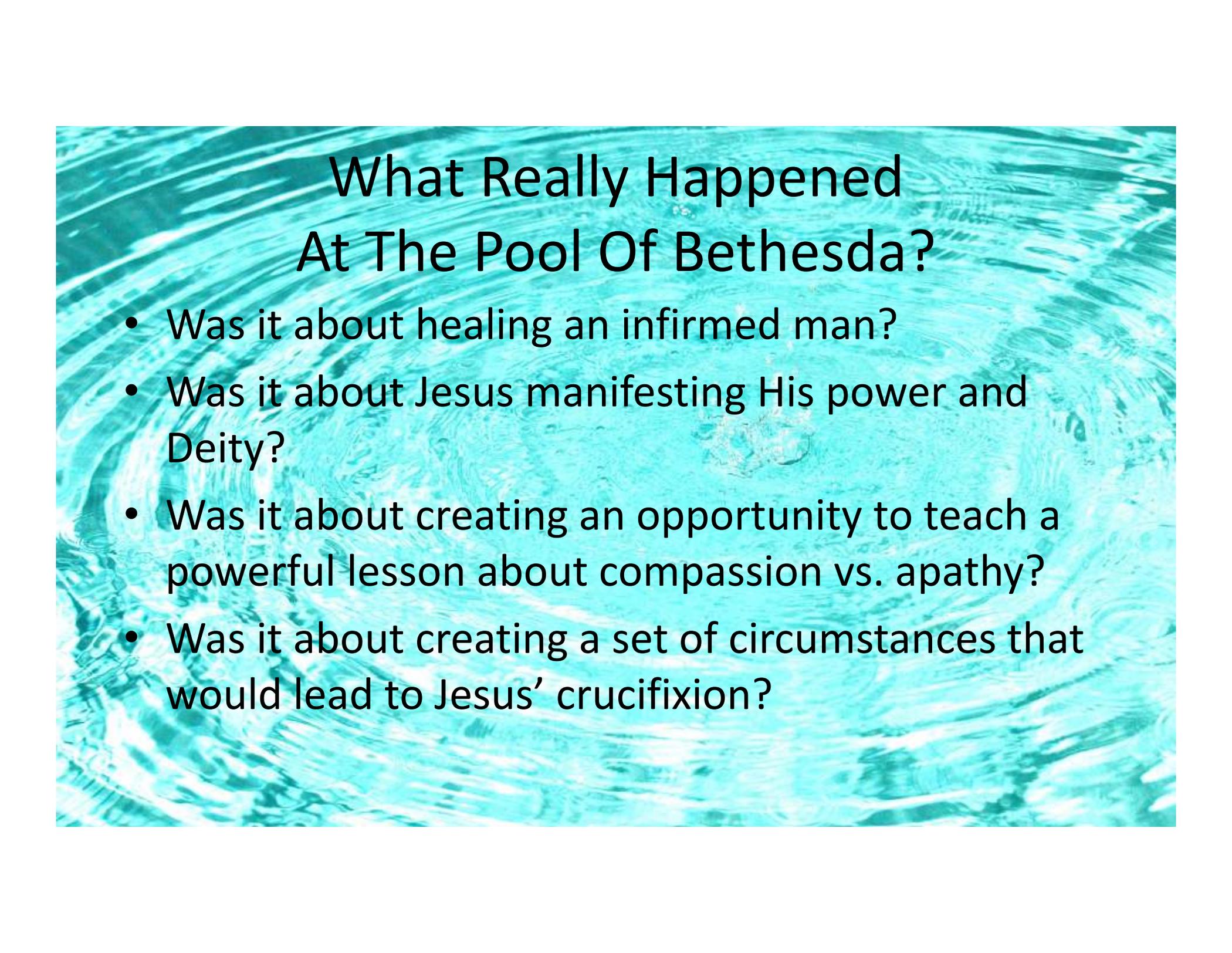




# Stirring the Water at Bethesda

John 5:1-18



## What Really Happened At The Pool Of Bethesda?

- Was it about healing an infirmed man?
- Was it about Jesus manifesting His power and Deity?
- Was it about creating an opportunity to teach a powerful lesson about compassion vs. apathy?
- Was it about creating a set of circumstances that would lead to Jesus' crucifixion?

# Background

- The name Bethesda means “house of mercy and grace”
- Bethesda was a combination of a large and a moderate sized pair of pools that were near the Sheep Gate
- The pools were swimming baths with five porticos or covered porches
- Built in the 8th century BC, about 150 years after David’s reign; converted to an asclepieion by Greek conquerors, a Hellenistic healing temple in the first century BC



# Background

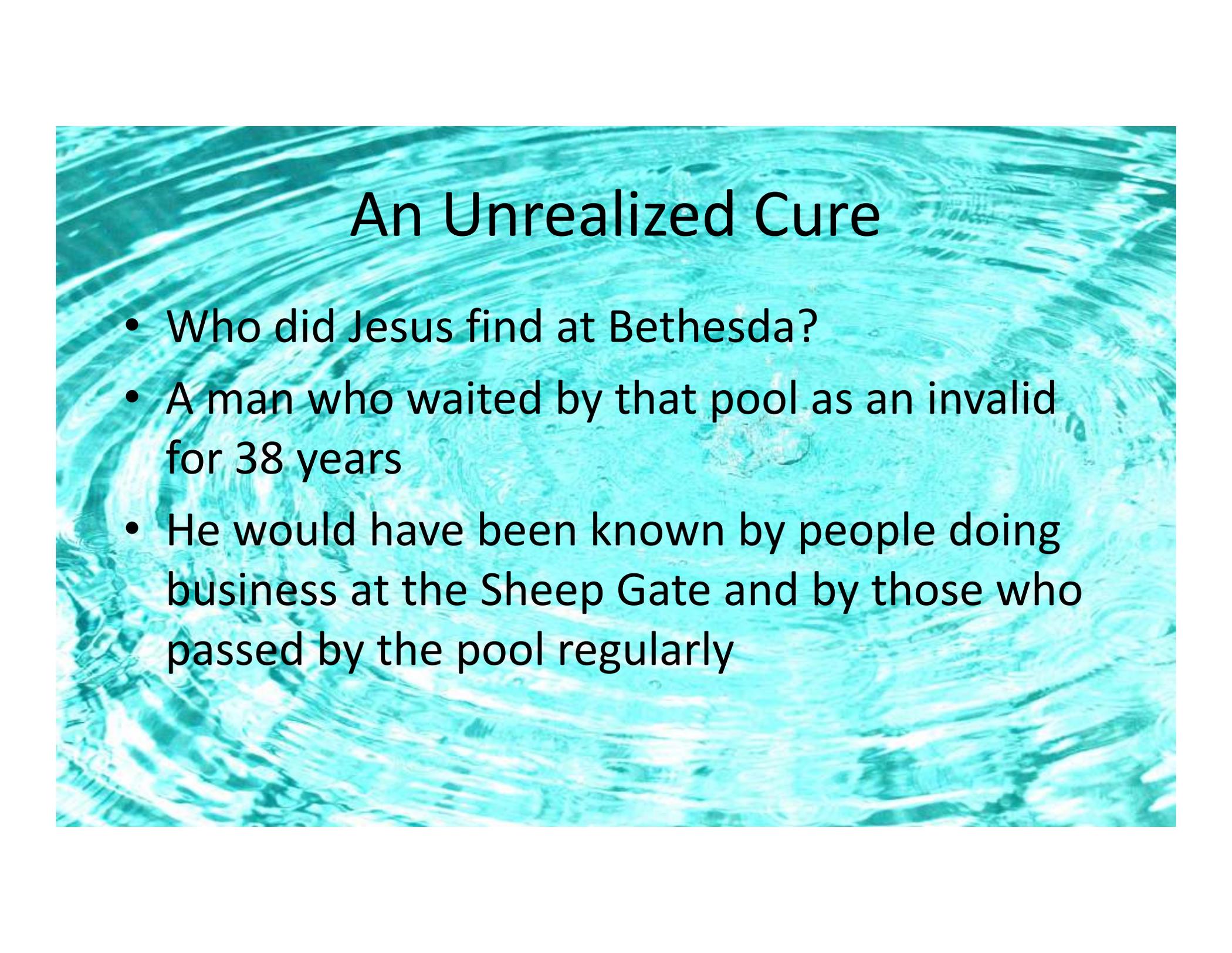
- Later, a Byzantine church was built on its site, and it was not re-discovered until the 1800s
- The angel stirring the water is very likely a Jewish tradition rather than part of the inspired text. It appears to be added into the text from a marginal note written by a copyist monk.
- More recent translations omit verse 4. Most textual scholars and serious Bible students dismiss it

# Background

- Mentioned in Old Testament scripture
  - 2Kings 18:17 - “Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which was on the highway to the Fuller's Field”
  - Isa. 7:3 - “Then the LORD said to Isaiah, Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field”

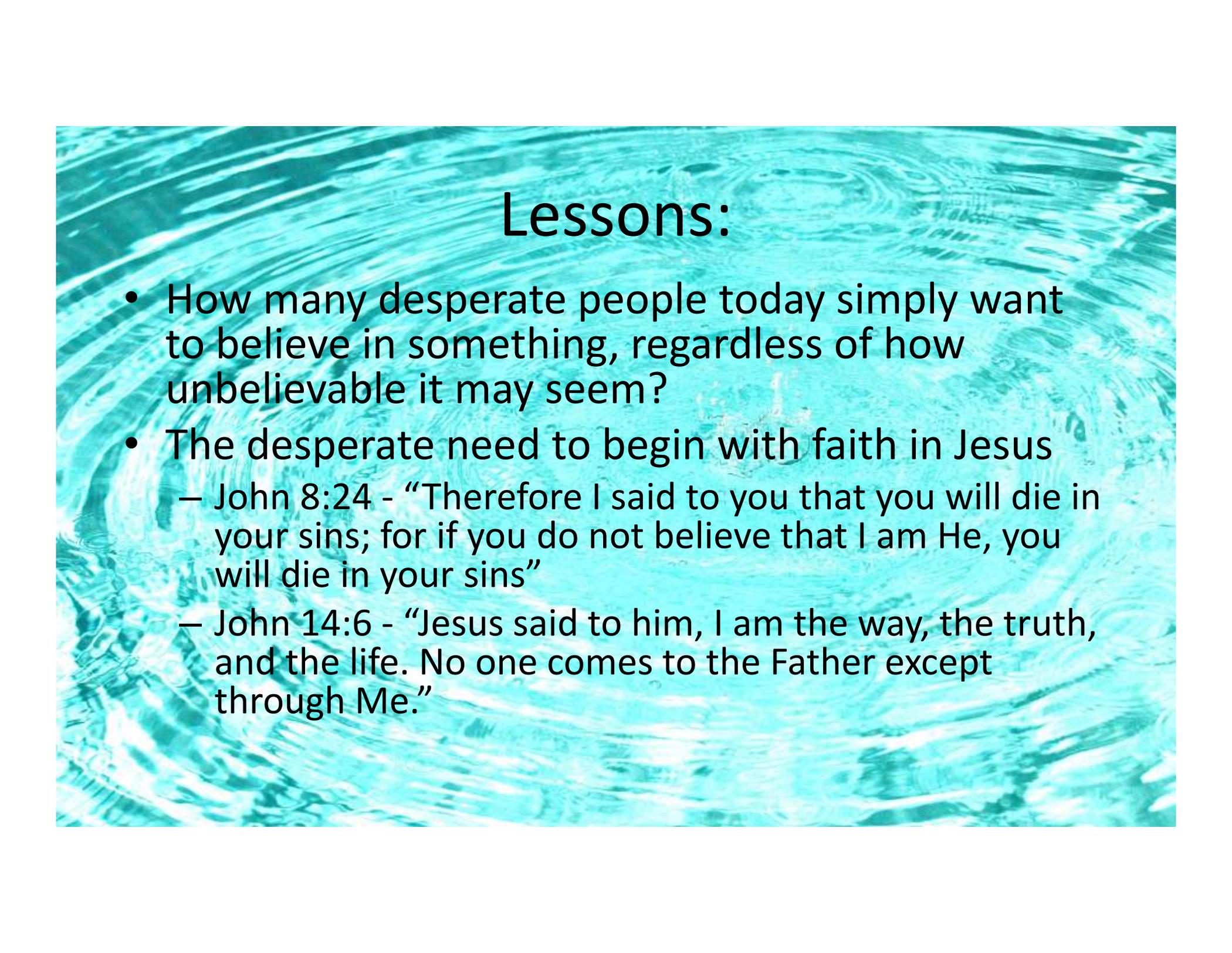
# An Unrealized Cure

- Bethesda was a place of sickness: the invalid, blind, lame, and paralyzed
- They believed that if they could get into the water when the waters were troubled, they would be healed.
- The Greeks were the ones who told them this was a healing temple; the Omride line of kings that built it 850 years ago made them to hold water for the sheep brought to Jerusalem market
- But the sick were there to be healed.



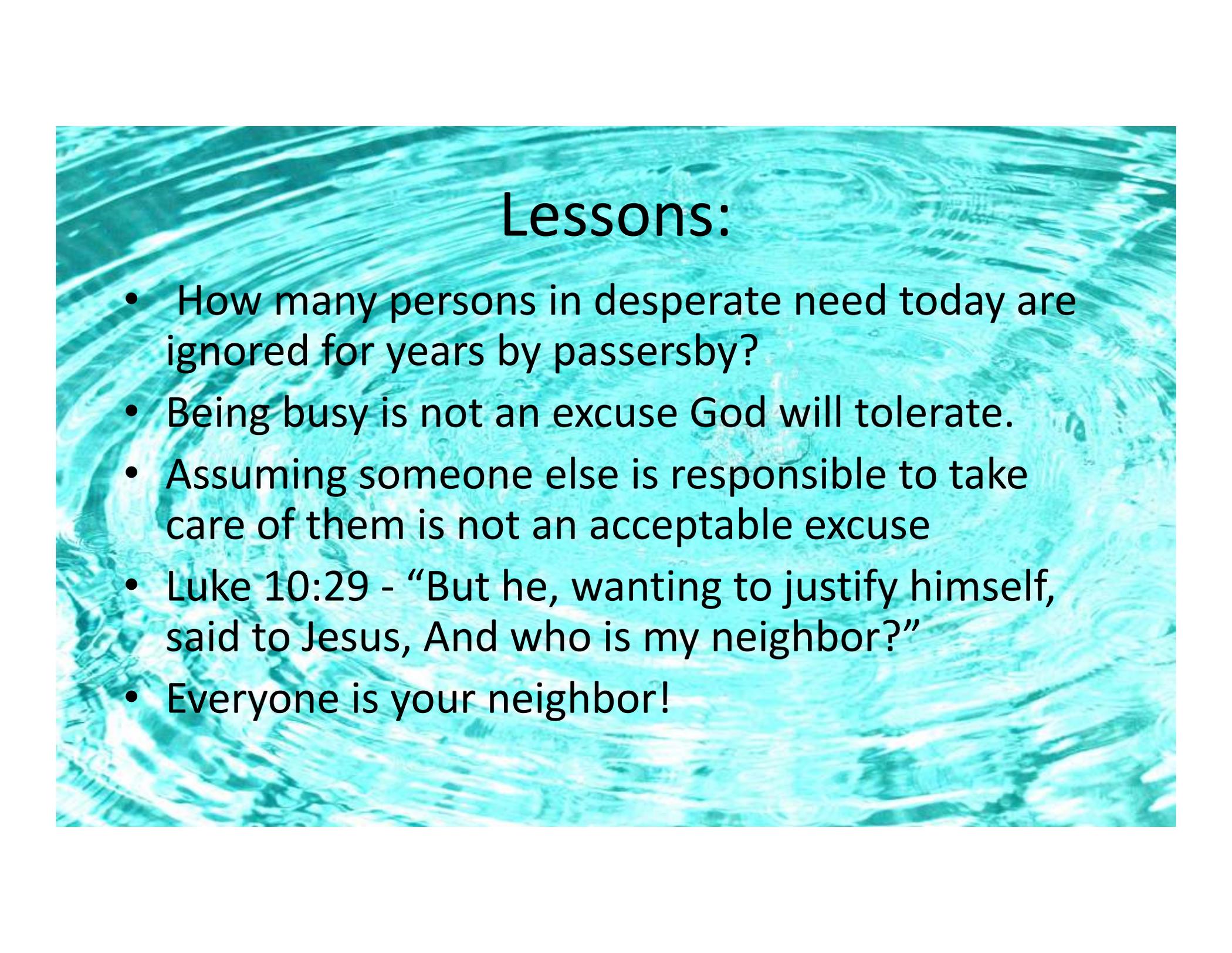
# An Unrealized Cure

- Who did Jesus find at Bethesda?
- A man who waited by that pool as an invalid for 38 years
- He would have been known by people doing business at the Sheep Gate and by those who passed by the pool regularly



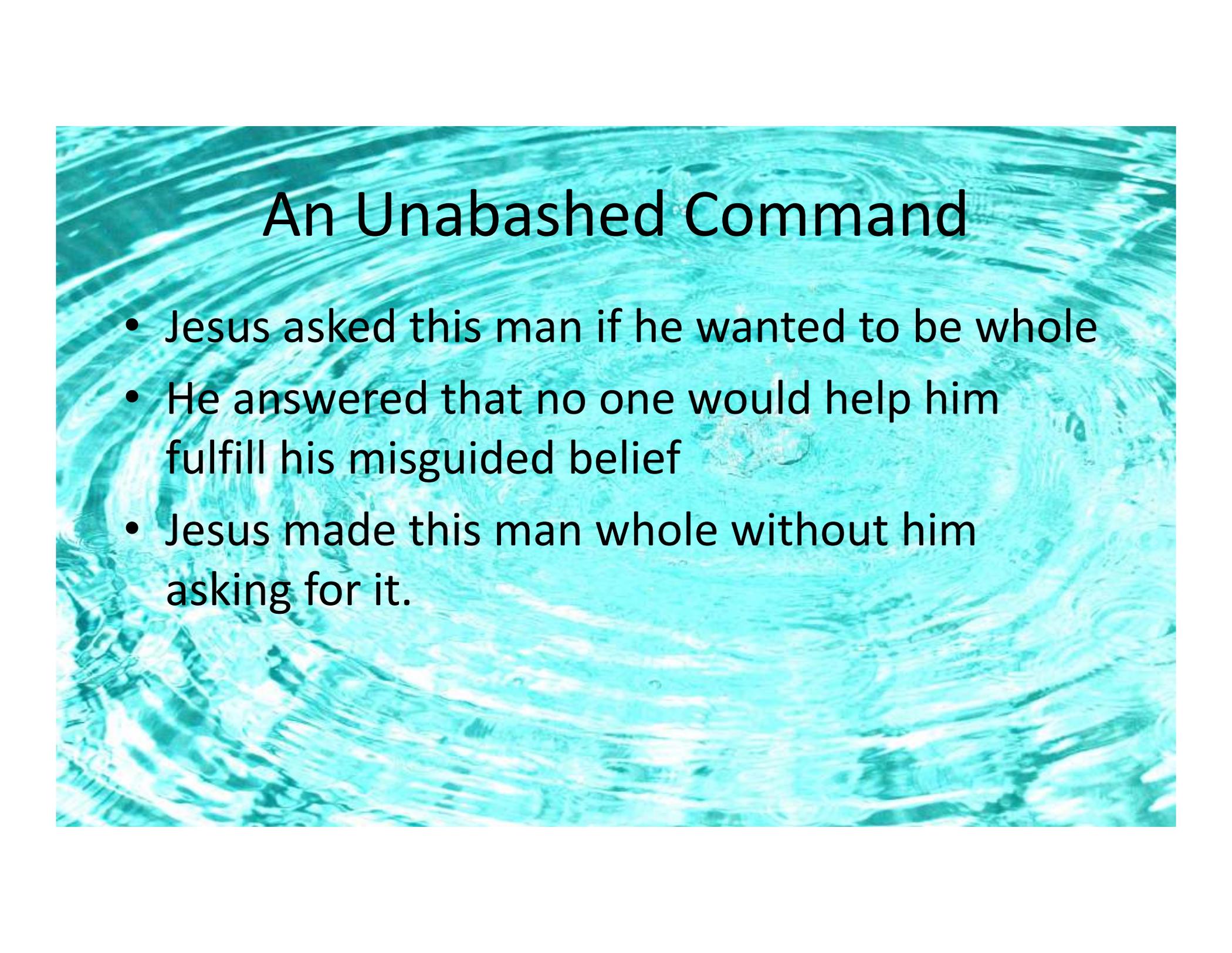
## Lessons:

- How many desperate people today simply want to believe in something, regardless of how unbelievable it may seem?
- The desperate need to begin with faith in Jesus
  - John 8:24 - “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”
  - John 14:6 - “Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”



## Lessons:

- How many persons in desperate need today are ignored for years by passersby?
- Being busy is not an excuse God will tolerate.
- Assuming someone else is responsible to take care of them is not an acceptable excuse
- Luke 10:29 - “But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbor?”
- Everyone is your neighbor!



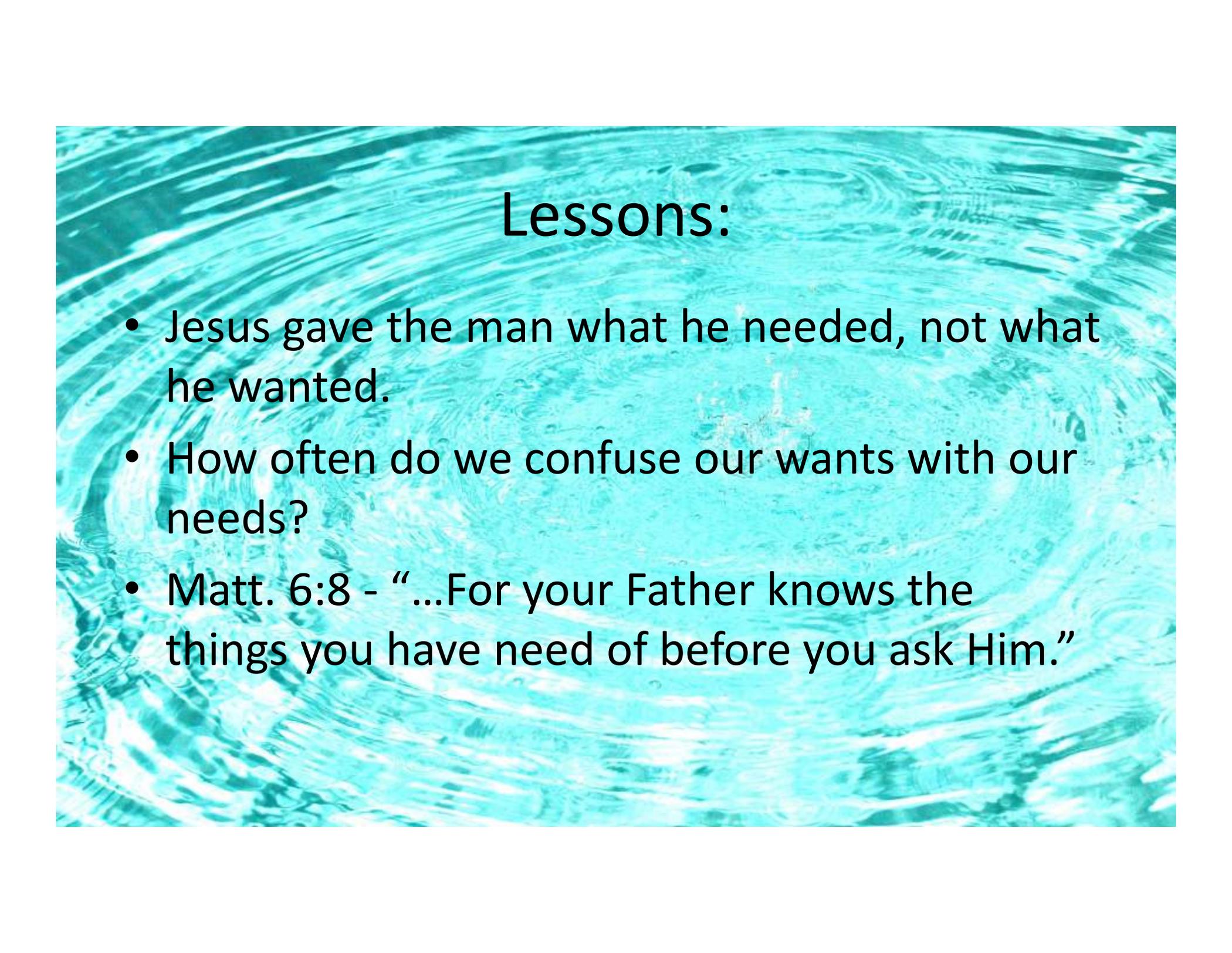
# An Unabashed Command

- Jesus asked this man if he wanted to be whole
- He answered that no one would help him fulfill his misguided belief
- Jesus made this man whole without him asking for it.



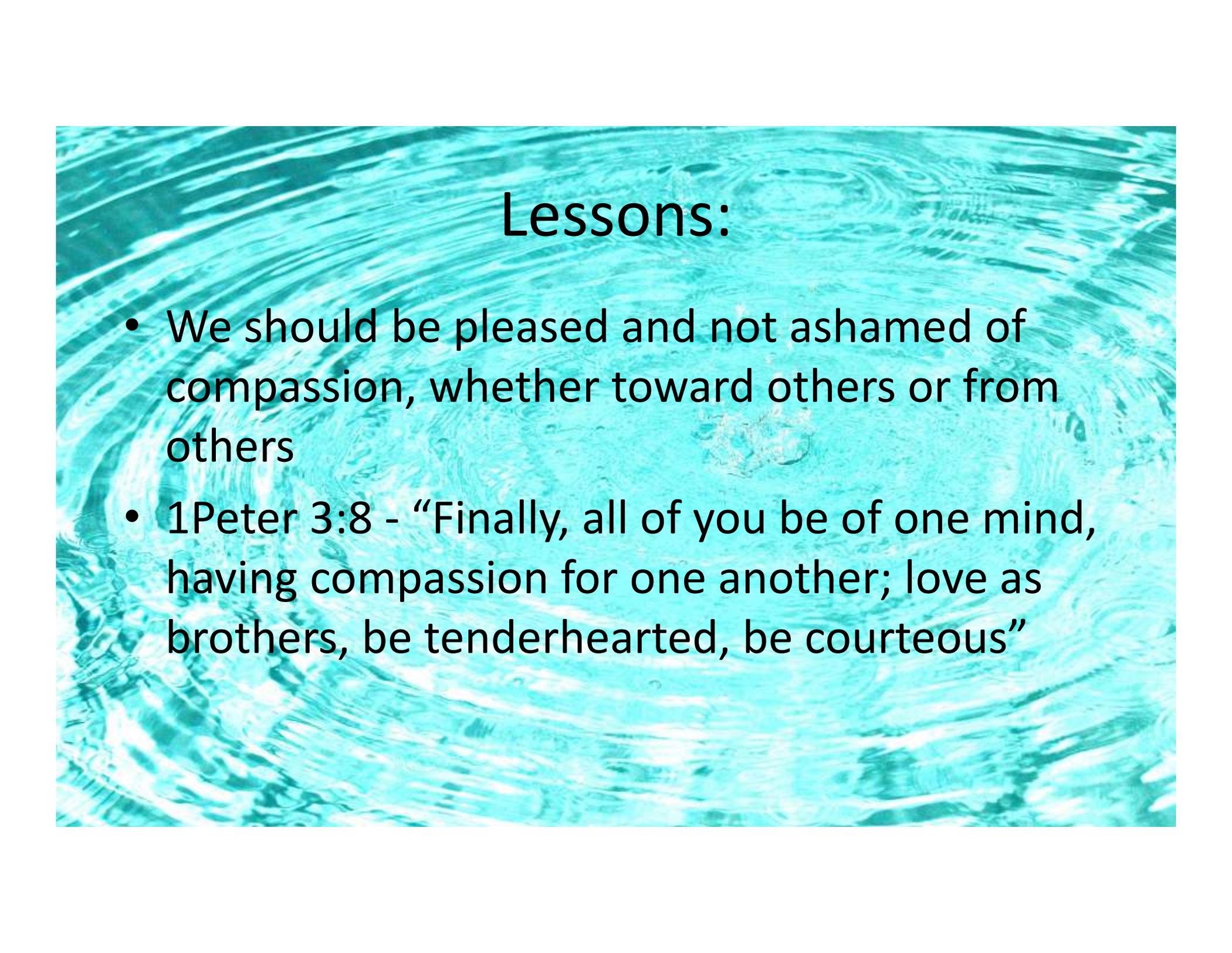
## Lessons:

- One ought not to be blind to other possibilities
- Luke 18:27 - “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”



## Lessons:

- Jesus gave the man what he needed, not what he wanted.
- How often do we confuse our wants with our needs?
- Matt. 6:8 - "...For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."



## Lessons:

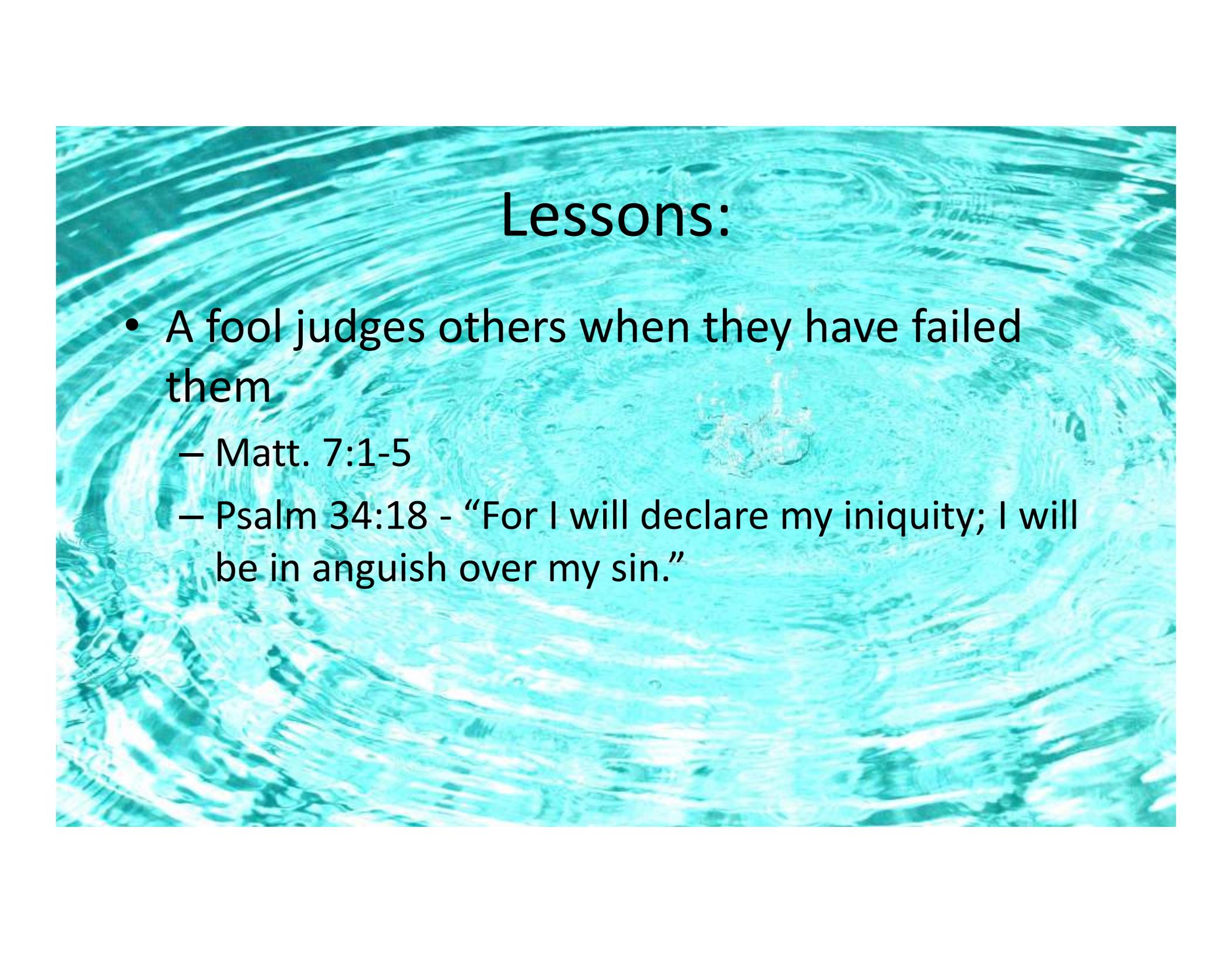
- We should be pleased and not ashamed of compassion, whether toward others or from others
- 1Peter 3:8 - “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous”

# Unjustified Criticism

- How many people walked by this man without noticing him over the course of the 38 years he was ill.
- But when he got up and carried his bed away on the Sabbath, they immediately saw him
- They didn't rejoice that he was healed. They can only criticize him for carrying his bed on the Sabbath.
- The truth is that they had failed this man for thirty-eight years. They failed to have compassion on him.

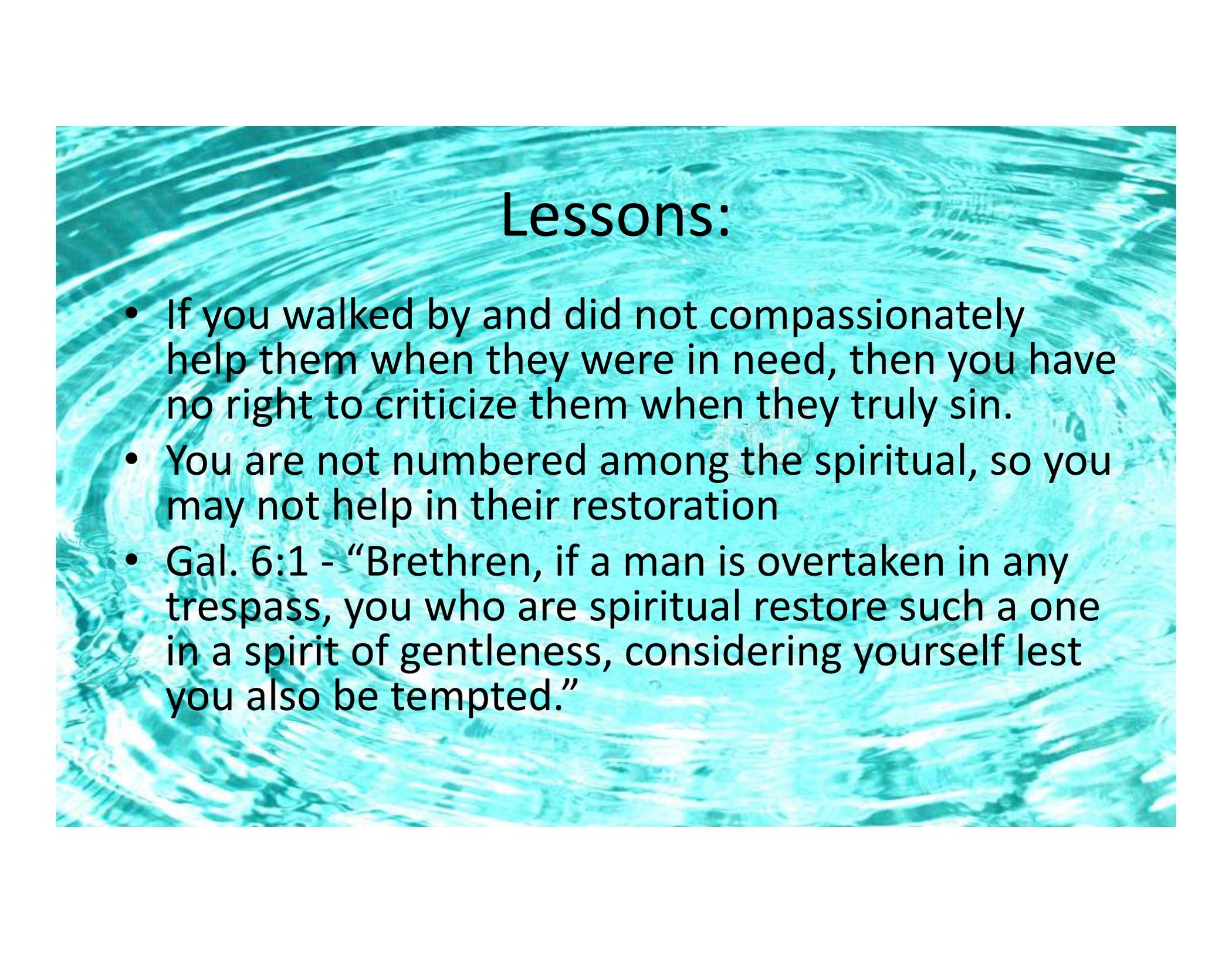
# Unjustified Criticism

- The healed man explains his actions.
- He was paralyzed but made whole. The One who did this commanded that he take up his bed and walk.
- The point is, that anyone who can perform such a miracle on the Sabbath has the authority to tell him what he can do on the Sabbath.



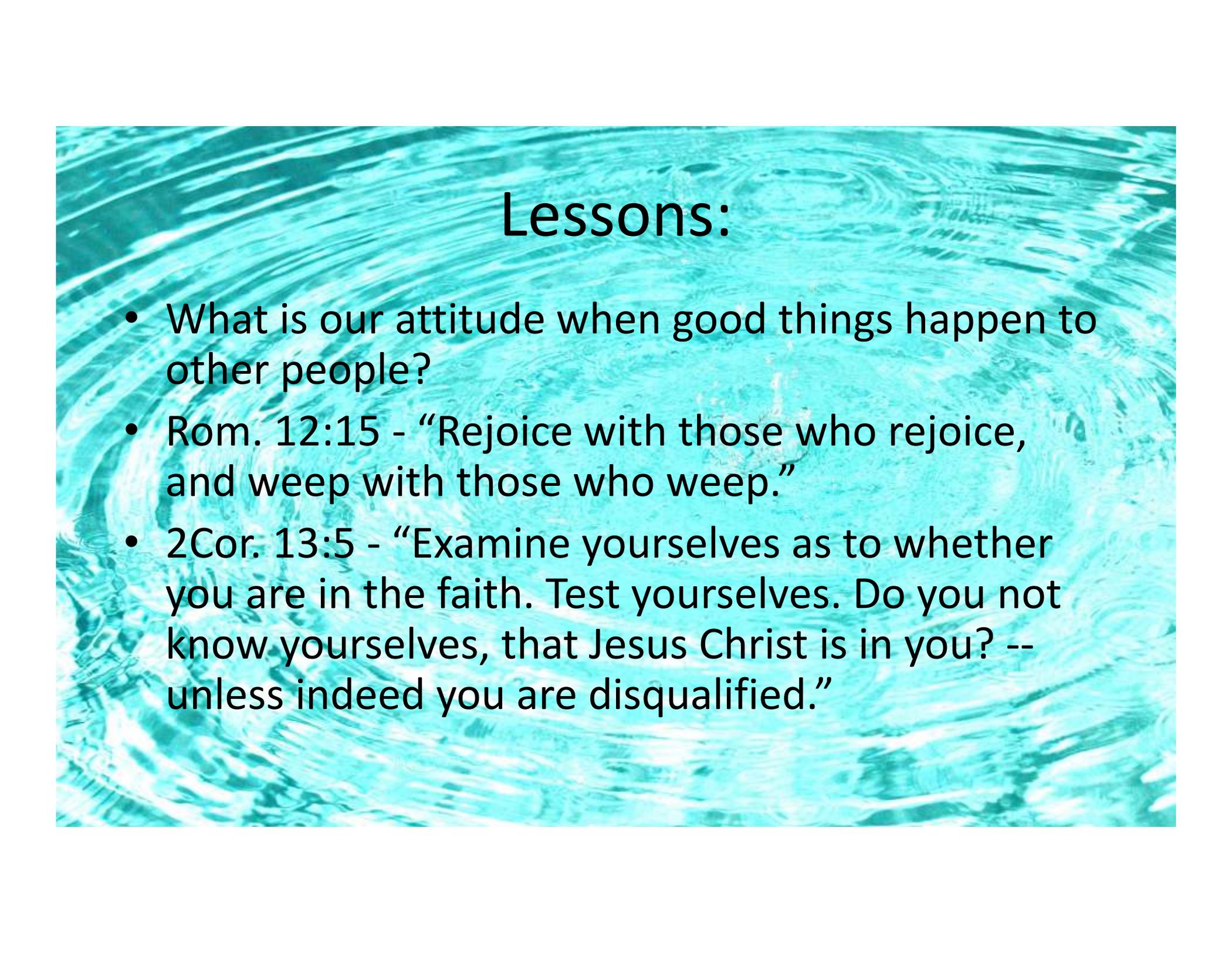
## Lessons:

- A fool judges others when they have failed them
  - Matt. 7:1-5
  - Psalm 34:18 - “For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.”



## Lessons:

- If you walked by and did not compassionately help them when they were in need, then you have no right to criticize them when they truly sin.
- You are not numbered among the spiritual, so you may not help in their restoration
- Gal. 6:1 - “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”



## Lessons:

- What is our attitude when good things happen to other people?
- Rom. 12:15 - “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”
- 2Cor. 13:5 - “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you are disqualified.”

# Unapologetic Confirmation

- Jesus said that both He and His Father work on the Sabbath.
- The Creator of the Sabbath rules over the Sabbath.
- His rule is that one cannot benefit himself on the Sabbath, but he can bring benefit to others

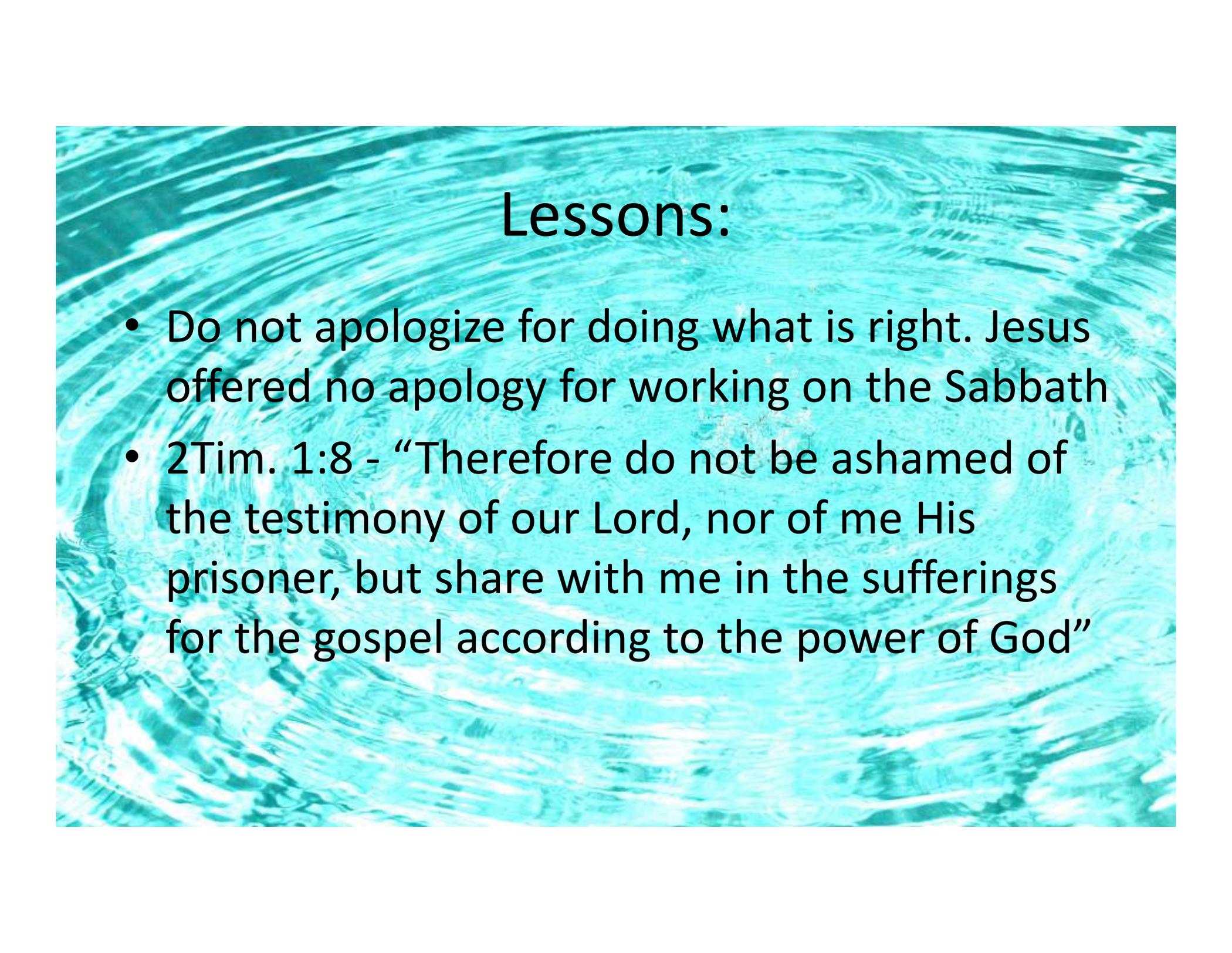
# Unapologetic Confirmation

- Mark 3:4 - “When He said to them, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? But they kept silent.”
- Matt. 12:11-12 - “Then He said to them, What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”
- Matt. 12:8 - “For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”



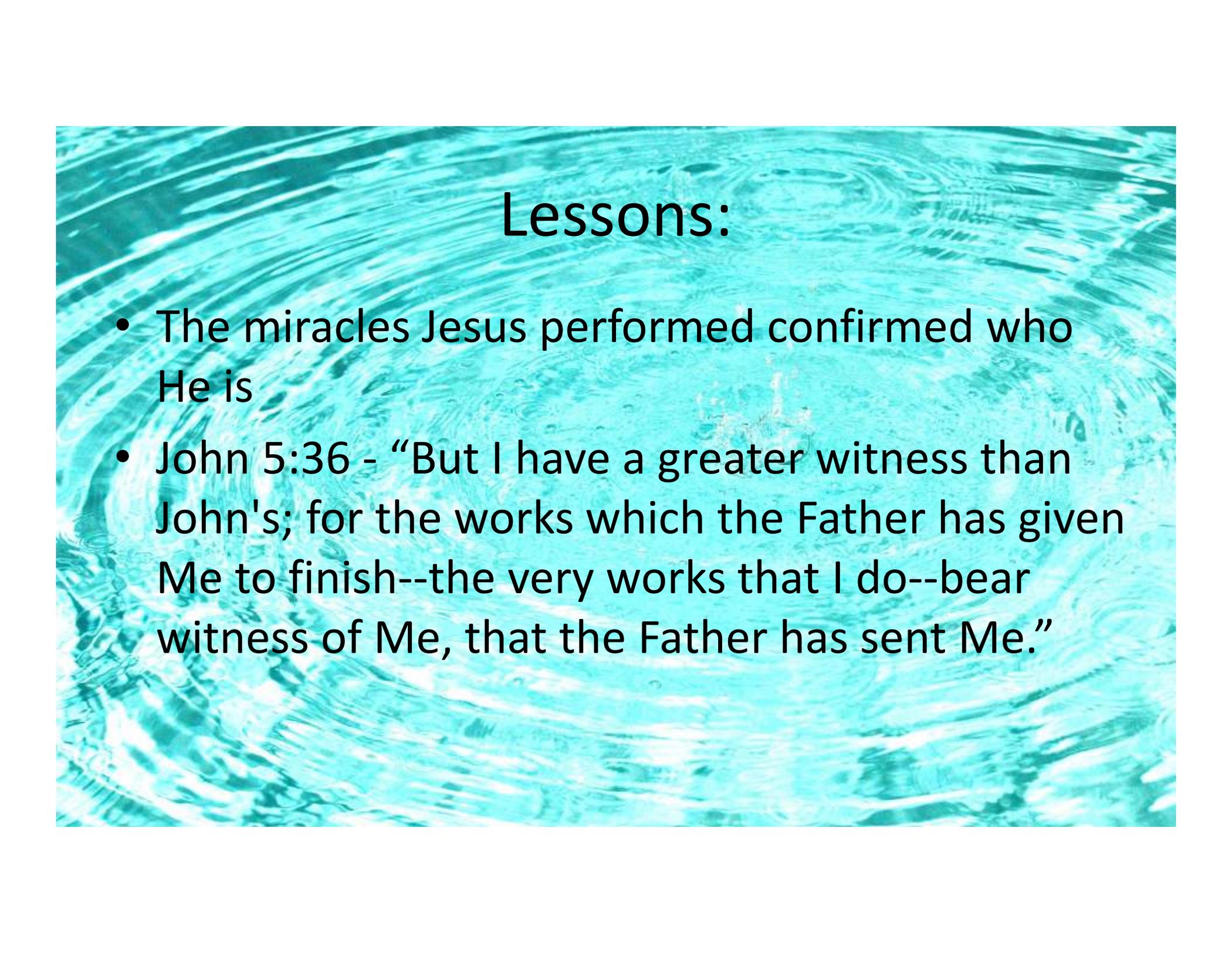
# Unapologetic Confirmation

- Sabbath was made for man, not man for Sabbath
  - Mark 2:27 - “And He said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”



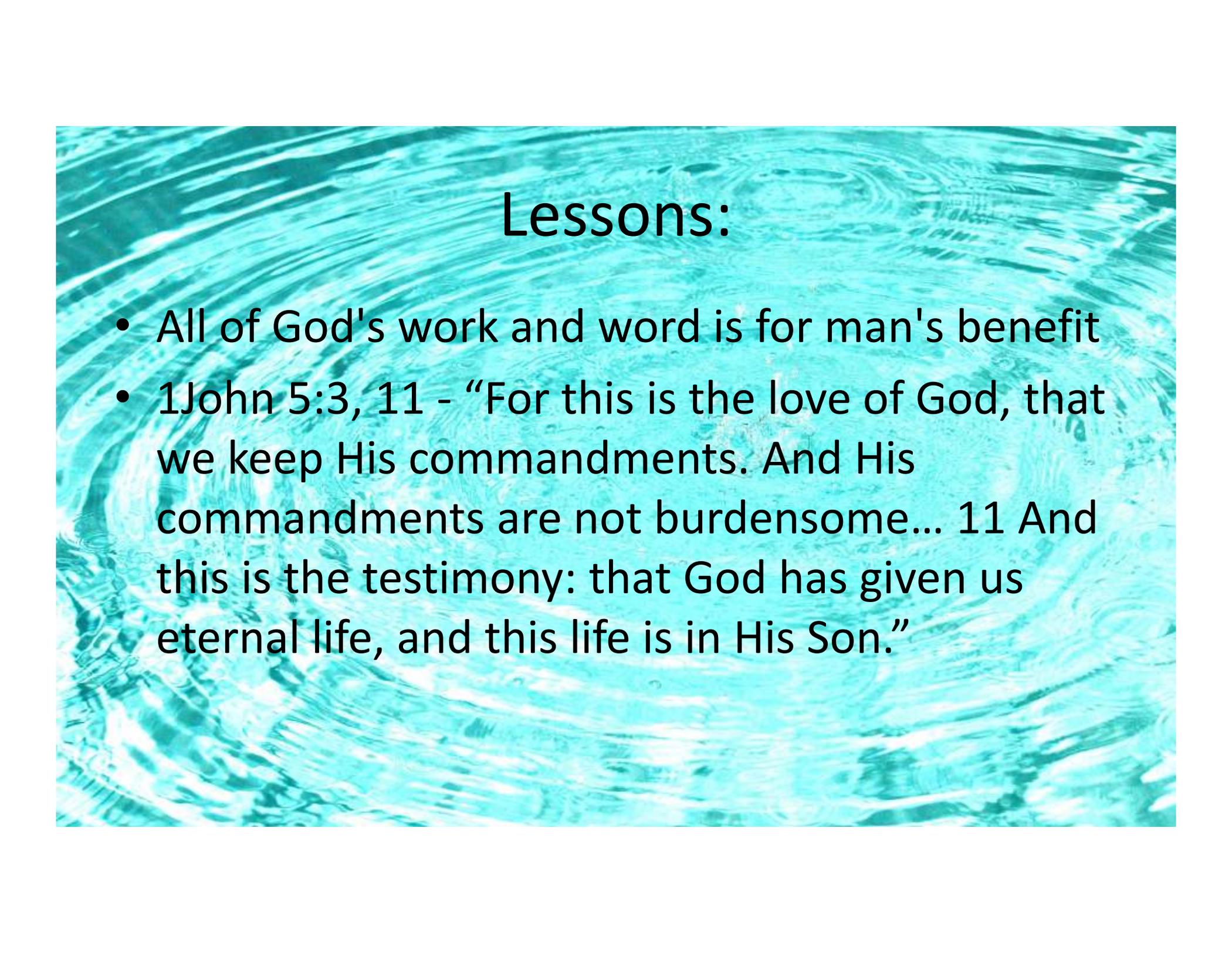
## Lessons:

- Do not apologize for doing what is right. Jesus offered no apology for working on the Sabbath
- 2Tim. 1:8 - “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God”



## Lessons:

- The miracles Jesus performed confirmed who He is
- John 5:36 - “But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”



## Lessons:

- All of God's work and word is for man's benefit
- 1John 5:3, 11 - “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome... 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”