

Carrying a Mat Fourth Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday, March 13, 2018 8:15 AM
Ez 47:1-9, 12; **Jn 5:1-16** (John surely wants us to consider ourselves and our own attitudes and views of what is good and what is not.)

This sign that John gives us is one of the odder stories in the New Testament. First of all, **the man does not ask for healing.** It's the only one I know of where Jesus goes to someone and says, "Do you want to be healed?" Ordinarily it seems that the request or the desire is a condition—ordinarily, but here no. The second strange thing about this is that **this man is not that grateful; in fact he betrays Jesus,** and because of him a persecution begins that eventually leads to his arrest.

Now the question has to be raised if you really are into Scripture: did he do this deliberately? **Did Jesus deliberately pick this man to further his grievances against the temple priesthood and the Sanhedrin?** I don't know, but it is possible. It is possible that this was actually something Jesus did to irritate the leaders. Where it says "Jews" here it always means the leaders. **So maybe it was all on purpose; I don't know.**

But when we look at this we have to ask ourselves, **what is the real bone of contention? It was the idea of carrying a mat,** that simple little thing, carrying a mat **on the sabbath.** Now if there is an example in Scripture of a "beam in the eye," I don't know another one better. Here **the leaders are completely unimpressed by the fact that a man who has been thirty-eight years lame now can walk.** That doesn't impress them at all. What bothers them is that he is carrying a mat on the sabbath. It's the complete lack of proportion, the complete lack of reason, **the lack of balance** that comes right at one reading this story. And **John surely wants us to consider ourselves and our own attitudes and views of what is good and what is not.**