“Wilt thou be made whole?”

(The Healing of the Lame Man)

John 5:1-18

9-15-2024

Introduction: vv.1-4

- Jesus can do what seems impossible!

I. *Christ healed a lame man*
Who had suffered <u>many years</u> (v.5)

II. *Christ healed a lame man*
From a heart of <u>pity and compassion</u> (v.6)

III. *Christ healed a lame man*
Who had no other <u>source of help</u> (v.7)

IV. *Christ healed a lame man*
By the power of <u>His Word</u> (v.8)

V. *Christ healed a lame man*
Immediately and <u>completely</u> (v.9)

VI. *Christ healed a lame man*
On the <u>Sabbath Day</u> (v.9b-16)

VII. *Christ healed a lame man*
By the Authority & <u>Will of His Father</u> (v.17-18)

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In John 5, we have the beginning of a pattern that can be observed in much of this Gospel:

1) Jesus performs a miracle (a “sign”)
2) The Jews react against that miracle in unbelief
3) Jesus delivers a discourse to teach the real significance of that miracle

What we have in John 5 is a bonefied, genuine, indisputable miracle.

v. 1

Since Jesus was the fulfillment of each of the Feasts of Israel, it is appropriate that He attended each Holy day festival.

v. 2

“When you visit St. Anne’s Church in Jerusalem, they will show you the deep excavation that has revealed the ancient Pool of Bethesda. The Hebrew name *Bethesda* has been spelled various ways and given differing meanings. Some say it means “house of mercy” or “House of grace,” but others say it means “place of the two outpourings.” There is historical and archeological evidence that two adjacent pools of water served this area in ancient times.” (Wiersbe, p. 304).

“Sheep market” = the sheep gate was located north of the Temple on the eastern side of the walled city of Jerusalem (cp. Neh. 3:1; 12:39).

It was through this gate that the sacrificial lambs were brought to the Temple for sacrifice. It is this place that the ultimate Lamb of God visits for the purpose of accomplishing a miracle.

“Five porches” – five colonnades or cloisters to shelter the sick (Ryrie)

v. 3

People with a wide variety of ailments gathered at this pool for a miracle. Gathered here were the sick, the blind, the lame and the paralyzed.

v. 4

While this verse is omitted from some manuscripts (and therefore is not included in the NIV), it is evidently authentic, as Tertullian (160-221 A.D.) paraphrases it in his writings “On Baptism” I:1:15.

Also, sick people gathered around a pool and stepping in for a cure (v. 7) would make no sense without the facts of verse 4.

"Stepped in" – People stepping into a certain water and obtaining a healing is reminiscent of Elisha's order to Naaman the leper to be immersed 7 times in the Jordan River for a healing.

The Lord intentionally used an angel's stirring of the water at Bethesda to set up and lead to the ultimate Bethesda healing – performed by His own Son.

- Jesus can do what seems impossible!

I. *Christ healed a lame man*
Who had suffered many years (v.5)

The duration and magnitude of the problem did not limit Jesus.

For 38 years this man agonized over a life-crippling ailment that left him lying on a pallet. It is evident from verse 7 that he didn't have the strength to even rise up off of his mattress, even if he desperately wanted to.

"No matter how you look at this miracle, it is an illustration of the grace of God. It was grace that brought Jesus to the Pool of Bethesda, for who would want to mingle with a crowd of helpless people! Jesus did not heal all of them; He singled out one man and healed him. The fact that Jesus came to the man, spoke to him, healed him, and then met him later in the temple is proof of His wonderful grace and mercy.

"John noted that the man had been ill for thirty-eight years. Perhaps he saw in this a picture of his own Jewish nation that had wandered in the wilderness for 38 years (Deut. 2:14). Spiritually speaking, Israel was a nation of impotent people, waiting hopelessly for something to happen." (Wiersbe, p. 304).

Of all the "great multitude" (v. 3), Jesus singles out one man. So it is with salvation. By God's grace, out of the multitudes of humanity, I am forever thankful that He singled out a sinner like me and saved me.

II. *Christ healed a lame man*
From a heart of pity and compassion (v.6)

"Jesus . . . <u>knew</u>" – God the Father allowed Jesus to use His omniscient mind to perceive the duration that this man suffered.

Jesus also knows all about your struggles and hurts!

"Wilt thou be made whole?" – Do you want to be made well? Do you desire to be cured? The answer would be obvious! Yes, he wanted to become whole again. But the question was: How? He had no power and no helper to get him into the waters when they occasionally became miraculous. He was about to understand that someone greater than an angel who stirred up water was in his presence.

My friend, someone greater than an angel is ready and willing to save your sin-sick soul also! He would ask you: "Wilt thou be saved?"

"No matter how miserable your life has been—no matter how lame your spiritual life or how long you've been limping—Jesus can change it. The real question is: Do you wish to get well?

"It's easy to become accustomed to life around the pool of misery. The peer group there certainly won't criticize you. People will make space for your pallet and then leave you to yourself—or even commiserate with you.

"But maybe, after years of inner poverty, you're looking for a change, longing to be restored to everything God created you to be. If so, Jesus is the ticket out of that slum. If you *really* want to get well, He'll give you the grace and strength to take up your pallet and walk." (Swindoll, p. 72).

Out of all the people, the Lord seems to single out this man due to the long duration of his problem.

The Lord seems to specialize in reaching the people with the mots difficult of problems, and He specializes in saving event he chiefest of sinners.

III. *Christ healed a lame man*
Who had no other source of help (v.7)

The man was in a desperate situation: no one cared about him or bothered to help him.

The Lord allowed him to be in an impossible situation so as to heighten the impact of Christ's compassionate heart and miraculous power.

How disappointed this man must have been when He saw the waters churning, yet he was powerless to get into the water in time. How many times he must have been the first to see that unusual moving of the waters and in desperation would try to slither off his pallet to get into the water, but to no avail.

Much like many a sin-sick soul—helpless, hopeless, powerless, yea, "dead in trespasses and sins"---but the Master comes and does for the sinner that which the sinner cannot do for himself.

IV. *Christ healed a lame man*
By the power of His Word (v.8)

Jesus did not need medicine or any therapeutic remedy.

"Rise" – There was such power in that command that if Jesus did not limit it to this one man, everyone in the world would have risen off of their sick bed. Compare this power to the power of Christ's command to raise the dead (Jn. 5:25, 28-29).

This miracle was no problem for Jesus, for by the power of His word,

1. The universe came into existence
2. The elements obeyed his voice
3. Lazarus would arise from the dead
4. Demons would be cast out
5. The deaf would hear, the blind would see, and the lame would walk

To rise would be one thing, but to lift up one's bed and walk around with it, would be a total, eye-catching miracle!

V. *Christ healed a lame man*
Immediately and completely (v.9)

"Immediately" – Without any delay; at that very instant the man was completely well. No long, drawn out process, but an instantaneous miracle. So it is with salvation. The moment a person believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, he or she is immediately saved.

Can you imagine the consternation of those who saw this man get up and walk? They would observe that he did not get into the water. How then was he healed? The answer was Jesus Christ.

VI. *Christ healed a lame man*
On the Sabbath Day (v.9b-16)

The day of the week did not matter to Jesus. He is not off-duty one day a week.

It is always the right day of the week to help someone in need.

v. 10
Do you think that this man really cared about what day of the week it was? He was cured!

v. 11
The healed man responds: "If you want to take issue, you will have to speak to the One who ordered me to carry my pallet."

v. 12
"Instead of rejoicing at the wonderful deliverance of the man, the religious leaders condemned him for carrying his bed and thereby breaking the law" (Wiersbe, p. 305).

Don't be surprised, Christian, at the opposition you will face due to the wonderful things Jesus has done for you! There will always be people who will try their best to criticize some virtue that God's grace brought into your life.

v. 14
Whatever ailment this man had, it was brought on by sin. Some sin in his life resulted in his former debilitating condition.

Just as smoking invites cancer, alcoholic drinking invites psoriasis of the liver, and sexual perversion invites AIDS, so sin brings on physical consequences.

Not all sickness is due to personal sin (EX: Job); however, the Bible teaches that there is often a direct link between sin and sickness (James 5:14-15; I Cor. 11:29-32).

v. 16
This was not the only miracle Christ did on a Sabbath day.

1) He had cured a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath (Mk. 3:3-5)

2) He also healed a demoniac (Lk. 4:31-37)

3) And He healed a blind man (Jn. 9:1-14)

Traditions of the Sabbath:
"Slipping in between the Old and New Testaments, the Pharisees amplified the Sabbath law by adding thirty-nine categories of unpermitted work, along with a number of tedious restrictions. These became part of the traditional teachings of the rabbis, who then enforced them among the people. Yet these requirements stretched considerably beyond God's original intent. For example, notice how obsessive the restrictions have become in just this one regulation.

"If a man removed his finger-nails by means of his nails or his teeth, and so, too, if [he pulled out] the hair of his head or his moustache or his beard; and so, too, if a woman dressed her hair or painted her eyelids or reddened [her face] – such a one [Rabbi] Eliezer declares liable [to a Sin-offering]. (Shab. 1-:6)" (Swindoll, p. 70-71)

Although the Jews had added a multitude of rules and regulations regarding the Sabbath, God basically instituted the Seventh Day (Saturday) to be a day of rest for Israel.

1) The Sabbath was to be a sign of Israel's relationship to God (Ex. 31:12-18)

2) The Sabbath was made for man's benefit; man was not made for the Sabbath
Mark 2:27
And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath:

3) The Sabbath (like any other day) was the perfect day to help others
Luke 6:9
Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

Some Details regarding the Sabbath:

--The Sabbath was only for the nation of Israel (**Ex. 31:12-18**; Deut. 5:15; Ezek. 20:12).

--The Sabbath was only a shadow of the reality which is in Christ (Col. 2:16, 17).
Col. 2:16-17
Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: [17] Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

--The Sabbath was not an issue over which Christians should judge one another (Rom. 14:4-5).

Romans 14:4-5

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. [5] One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

--Paul seriously questioned the salvation of those who depended on keeping of Sabbaths and holidays for salvation (Ga. 4:9-11).

Galatians 4:9-11

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? [10] Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. [11] I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

--The early church met on Sunday, evidently in commemoration of the Lord's resurrection (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2).

--There is no command for New Testament Christians to keep the Saturday Sabbath. (See: Romans 13:9)

VII. *Christ healed a lame man*
By the Authority & Will of His Father (v.17-18)

v. 17
Jesus identifies His working with His Father's working.

As He will state in vv. 19ff, everything He does, He accomplishes by the will, plan, power, and purpose of the Father.

v. 18
By using the personal pronoun **"My Father"** (v. 17) instead of "our Father", Jesus claimed a unique relationship to the Father.

The Jews perfectly understood Jesus to claim a special relationship to God the Father and that by such He was claiming to be equal with God. They, unlike so many cults who deny His deity, perfectly understood what Jesus was claiming.

"Equal with God" – Jesus was equal in nature and essence. The Scripture teaches that He is "one" with God (Jn. 10:30) and is equal with God (Phil. 2:6). Such a claim attests to His deity.