

24 - 5:1-15 Jesus Heals At The Bethesda Pool

REVIEW / INTRODUCTION

Last week we spoke about Jesus and the woman at the well. The woman told everyone in town that she had found the messiah. They rushed out to Jacob's well to hear the words of Jesus. Jesus told his disciples to have a sense of urgency about winning others to faith in Christ. He said the fields (of ready souls) are white for the harvest.

We are going to skip the last few verses of chapter 4 in which Jesus heals a government official's son. We already covered this material in sermon 14 of this series. Sermon 14 and full text are available on the web site or I can share the google doc with you if you gmail me.

READING THE TEXT

John 5:1-15 (ESV)

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda,

which has five roofed colonnades. 3 In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. 5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 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?” 7 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.” 8 Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” 9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. 10 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.” 11 But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” 12 They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” 13 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withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well!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.” 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

PREACHING THE TEXT

John 5:1-15 (ESV)

¹ After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

After Jesus heals a government official's son He heads to Jerusalem for a feast.

A FEAST OF THE JEWS

The author does not tell us which feast brought Jesus to Jerusalem because it is not related to the immediate narrative.

² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.

SHEEP GATE

The sheep gate is a small opening in the city wall near the temple where sheep were let in to be sacrificed for the sins of Israel.

BETHESDA

The pool was fed by an underground spring. Occasionally the springs gushed really fast and a red color filled the pool. People thought of it as a fountain of youth that could cure diseases, so they flocked from great distances.

The seating area around the pool was covered, much like the gas pumps have a huge canopy that keeps you dry and shaded. People would come and sit in the shade near the pool. The pool was a tourist trap and the shops nearby no doubt promoted the legend of the healing waters so that tourists would continue to come to the pool and to their shops. Come to Wonder Spot in Jerusalem and see the healing waters turn Red every 30 minutes.

³ In these **(covered areas next to the pool)** lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.

THE MULTITUDE OF INVALIDS

Desperate people with incurable diseases and infirmities desperately hoped to be healed by the miracle working waters of the pool. If you are tempted to make fun of them for this legend of healing waters remember that people everyday fall for miracle prayer cloths, miracle working prayer formulas and crying statues.

WHERE IS VERSE 4?

If you look in a NASB or ESV you will not find verse 4. The NIV has a notation next to verse 4. Verse 4 says;

4 From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had.

THE MARGIN NOTE GETS SQUEEZED INTO THE TEXT

Why is verse 4 missing in the best versions of English Bible? In the 1st century scribes in the Jerusalem area made copies of John's gospel to send to a group of churches in Asia. In the margin of this gospel they included this local legend of the angel stirring the waters so that people in Asia would understand why people were

flocking to this pool in order to be healed. So verse 4 was written originally in the margin as a side note to explain the local historical context so that the bible text would make more sense. So then a church in Asia went to make another copy and they squeezed the margin note explaining the legend of the angels stirring the waters into the body of the bible text. From that time on manuscripts tracing back to Asia included verse 4 in the body of the text when it was never supposed to be in the bible.

So desperate people sat around a pool hoping the legend was true. Yet none of them were healed.

⁵ One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ 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?”

JESUS KNEW HE HAD BEEN THERE ALONG TIME

It was not the will of God to heal everyone at the pool. Jesus zeroed in on this guy.

DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?

Addicted To Our Disorder

This man was probably 55 or 60 years old. He has been sick for 38 years. That is a long time to be so sick that you can not live a normal life.

Jesus asked a very good question. Do you want to be healed? Some people have various disorders that end up serving them well. I had the disorder of self pity and it served me well for about 10 years. I had a good excuse for every failure. I had someone to blame. I was a victim and everyone was going to hear about my victimhood. This was my way of milking a cheap substitute for love out of people.

But then one day Jesus asked me; “do you want to be healed?” And i had to decide if i loved my disorder more than I wanted to be healed.

So the sick man gives Jesus a good reason for why he is still sick. He has placed his hope in the legend but he can't beat everyone into the pool to get his healing. It is possible that Jesus knows this man had gotten used to his disorder. He uses it is to beg for food and money. What would he do if he were not a beggar?

⁷ 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.”

LOOKING TO THE LATEST FAD RATHER THAN JESUS

Jesus does not accept the premise, that this man is sick ONLY because he can not get into the water's faster than everyone else. Jesus shows the true means of healing and in a few verses from now he will show the man the reason for his ailment. It has nothing to do with a lack of help to carry him into the water.

⁸ Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath.

CARRY BED AND SHOW OFF YOUR HEALING

Carry your bed is a command given more than once by Jesus and His apostles. For example;

Acts 9:34

And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.” And immediately he rose.

The bed used to carry the lame person and now the lame person carries the bed. This carrying of the bed is a signal of victory through the power of Jesus. One would expect the lame man would be greeted with cheering and praises to God.

¹⁰ 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.”

IT IS NOT LAWFUL TO TAKE UP YOUR BED!

Jesus healed on the Sabbath. The bible does not forbid healing on the Sabbath. What is the big deal? The Talmud is a Jewish rule book and commentary that Jewish leaders added to the bible. It was these additional extra-biblical rules that forbid things like healing on certain days or moving your bed on certain days.

The Old Testament forbade working in a vocation on the sabbath. But routine things like feeding one's livestock

or cleaning up a mess in your house, or rolling up your mattress is not forbidden. The heart of the law is that God does not want you to work like a mad freak every day of the week never slowing down to feast on the presence of God in worship. Physically, mentally and spiritually there are important reasons to sabbath.

We are no longer under the Old Testament law, however, the principle of rest is a very important idea. We are free to choose the day but the action of slowing down and focusing on God and maintaining ourselves is very important. My day off is Friday.

So the Jewish Leaders are freaked out that someone dared crossed the rules that they have added to scripture. This kind of legalism kills the work of the Spirit and makes it difficult for people to find the Lord. Legalism and adding rules to the bible is demonic! it does not allow people to celebrate God sightings. Rather it scrutinizes with demonic judgment whether God dared to work within my guidelines through the people that i approve of using my personal extra biblical convictions. Faith Free Church is a place in

which we will celebrate the God sightings. We will not add rules to the bible. We will not make it difficult for people to come to faith in Christ. And we will measure things by the word of God and the leading of The Spirit of God.

The religious leaders harass the healed guy and focus in on the rule and never appreciate the God sighting. How dare you carry your mattress on Saturday you terrible healed person!

¹¹ But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” ¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?”

WHO IS THIS MAN

This man Jesus healed is more focused on getting himself off the hook than on showing appreciation or loyalty to Jesus. He is very quick to turn on Jesus if might meant he could avoid the anger of religious bullies.

¹³ 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 WITHDREW

Not only did this lame guy display no faith in order to be healed. He was healed even though Jesus knew he would betray Him. Some people suggest that a person must have faith in order to be healed. But that is hardly ever the case in scripture.

AN OVERVIEW OF GOD'S HEALING

There are occasions like in this text in which the person receiving the healing has no idea what is coming and has little or no faith and often no idea of who God is.

On the other hand God will at times give the person who prays for the sick a great surge of faith and spiritual power as they pray.

Note: James 5:13-14

When we do pray for the sick, the dying or crippled person God will most often do something to intervene. Many times God's intervention is peace, joy and contentment. Let's not forget that contentment and endurance and joy from The Holy Spirit is a miracle from God that preaches that God's grace is sufficient.

But there have been occasions in which as I prayed a great rush of faith and of God's power came over me and people were delivered, healed or set free in some way. It is completely up to God as to how He wants to work in a given situation. The best approach I have found that applies in every situation is to seek to discern where God is at work and join Him there. Pray that God would show you what He wants to do and then reel it in through a prayer of faith. Most often the answer will be miraculous contentment and joy. If God healed according to some formula then God would get none of the glory and the person who figured out the formula would be held up and almost worshipped, kind of like some are today.

Jesus healed this man but Jesus was not done with him yet. He was more concerned for the man's soul than his physical health. So....

¹⁴ 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."

SIN NO MORE - NOTHING WORSE MAY HAPPEN

If you come across someone who tells you that you are sick because there must be sin in your life, please point them out so I can send them a lump of coal for Christmas. That is usually spiritual abuse. And I despise spiritual abuse. However, there are occasions in which people get sick because of their sin. Only God knows and sometimes He will reveal the truth. There can be an obvious connection to sickness and sin.

Sin Caused Sickness

People get sick when they have sex especially with multiple partners. Without the modern medicines some sexually transmitted diseases could cripple or kill a person.

Then there are people who drink their liver away or smoke themselves into a heart attack and high blood pressure and all it's resulting maladies.

Wreckless behavior can lead to serious injury.

Finally, God is holy and loves His bride and will do what it takes to protect His church. There are occasion in scripture in which people are slandorous, divisive,

dishonest or treacherous within the church and God does not allow it to continue. There are a few examples in scripture in which God either took someone home or caused someone to be sick. And example is Ananias and Sapphires lying to the Holy Spirit in front of the congregation. A second example is the sickness of some who were reckless while they took the Lord's Supper. James 5 speaks of some occasional connection between illness and sin. In that case confession and a prayer of faith will restore that person.

God is patient with us that He gives us many opportunities to repent and thereby glorify Jesus. But are times when God reminds us of His absolute holiness and His desire to purify His bride.

In this text the man's sickness was due to a sin issue.

Jesus warned him to turn from his sin so that nothing worse would happen. The worse thing that Jesus does not wish on this formerly lame man is eternity in hell. There is nothing worse than hell.

So in some way this man's sin led to his sickness. God heals him. But it does not seem he is terribly grateful about his healing. Look at when he does after Jesus tells him to sin no more;

¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

In other words, the man turned in Jesus. Jesus is the one who healed him on the sabbath and told the man to worship God by taking up his mat and celebrating his healing. This man was not going to get on the bad side of the Sanhedrin no matter where that put Him with Jesus. WHO DO YOU WANT TO PLEASE MORE?

The healed man wanted to please the Religious leaders more than he wanted to please Jesus Christ. That is always a recipe for disaster. That is also a very good measure of our heart. Are we most interested in pleasing Jesus or pleasing others? The answer will reveal a great deal about the condition of our soul and spirit.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Are there pharisees in your life that you are still trying to please?
2. Are you at times focused on extra biblical convictions that steals your appreciation of the work of The Spirit?
3. Is God giving you a gift of faith to pray for someone to be healed or set free? If so, let er rip, but don't blame the victim if it is not God's timing to heal.
4. Have you grown so accustomed to your addiction or illness that you no longer want to be healed or set free?