

GOSPEL OF JOHN
JESUS AND THE IMPOTENT MAN
JOHN 5:1-16

Introduction

What a wonderful world this would be without sickness and death. Imagine a world where there would be no need for doctors, hospitals, health clinics, nursing homes, or mortuaries. That's what it was like here on planet earth before Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden!

After man sinned, things changed drastically and then just kept getting worse. (By that, I mean sickness and death entered the scene. Life spans kept getting shorter and shorter while sickness and disease became more rampant.)

There was a "*quantum leap*", if you will, from a world free of disease and death to a world plagued by diverse diseases and injuries and finally death.

That original sin of Adam and Eve ushered in both viral and bacterial attacks that began to make war against every living thing—both animals and plants.

James 1:15 tells us, "*Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*"

All sickness and disease, whether deadly or not, is a by-product of man's original sin. But understand that not all sickness and disease comes from the result of any particular sin or sins of the lives of those that suffer from them.

Sometimes they are, such as in the life of some in the Corinthian Church. Paul, writing about partaking of the Lord's Table in *1 Corinthians 11:29-30* said, "*For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*"

The sickness and death mentioned by Paul there was as a result of folks not properly confessing and judging sin in their lives as they came to the Lord's Table and therefore the chastening hand of God brought about some sicknesses and some deaths in many of the believers in that city!

1 Corinthians 11:32 "*But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*"

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We all know that there are diseases that can be caused by either sinful habits or sinful lifestyles.

Doctors warn that cirrhosis of the liver can be the result of alcohol consumption, but not all cirrhosis of the liver is caused by alcohol consumption. (e.g. My wife's dad)

Doctors warn that heart disease can be the result of bad habits, but it can also come from having a genetic disposition to such. (e.g. My dad...me and my brothers)

For years the Surgeon General has warned that smoking can cause lung disease and vascular problems leading to sickness and death, but not all lung and vascular problems come as a result of one smoking. (Mom...COPD but never smoked a day in her life)

So what I'm saying is that we need to be careful about judging someone's sickness or even injury as being related to some sin or sins in their life because we cannot know their heart. But Jesus knows our hearts because He is God!

And a careful examination of our text discloses that this "***certain man***" that Jesus helped had a condition that **WAS** due to some sin. For thirty-eight years he had suffered because of that sin, and after he was healed, he was warned by the Savior to "*sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*" (*vs. 14*).

I. CONSIDER THE PLACE WHERE THE SICK MAN WAS!
(Vs. 1-6)

While the Jews were observing the religious festivities of one of their feast days, this "***certain man***" of our text (along with what is said to be "***a great multitude***" of other hurting people) was out by this pool in Bethesda **with a false hope** of gaining some measure of deliverance from whatever awful physical dilemma he had in his body!

For **thirty-eight years** this man had been in this condition, hoping to receive some measure of relief, but had to yet receive any.

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This had to have been a sad sight as these suffering people gathered here periodically in hope of being healed by the stirring of the water in this pool.

This pool was called in the Hebrew tongue *Bethesda* which means *"house of mercy or house of kindness."* Scripture says here that this pool had five porches.

The number five in the Bible is **the number of grace** because it is often associated with **God's grace, mercy, and goodness.**

This man didn't know it, but after having suffered for thirty-eight long years with his condition, God's *"mercy and kindness...His grace"* were about to be made available to this man...**BUT, it wasn't going to be found in this pool!**

Regardless of how wicked one may be or have been, and how miserable their condition may be because of sin, God's *goodness and mercy* through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is available to them! But they need help!

The poor miserable man lay there by this pool in the hope of somehow getting himself to the *"moving waters"* at the right time. But he wasn't alone! He was joined by a multitude of others described here as *"impotent folk, blind, halt, and withered."* (Vs 3)

These people who are described here as hurting physically are a picture of all those in the world who are hurting spiritually in their trespasses and sin! **They were all in need of God's grace and mercy!**

Think about it:

1. **"Impotent"** – Means *"to be weak; feeble; wanting in strength or power."* Romans 5:6 – *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."*
2. **"Blind"** – Means *"unable to see; hindered or deprived of sight."*

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2 Corinthians 4:3-4 – *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

Acts 26:18 – *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins..."*

Impotent...Blind...

3. **"Halt"** – Means *"lame; limping; hobbled; unable to walk properly."*
Ephesians 2:2-3 – "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."
4. **"Withered"** – Means *"faded; to waste; to pine away; scorched"*
Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

We are told that the Lord Jesus visited this *"certain man"* who was just one of the multitude of souls at this pool who was in desperate need.

Why this particular man caught the Lord's attention here we are not told. It could have been the longevity of his condition...it could have been that this man had gotten to the point of realizing his desperate condition and had gotten to the place maybe where he had begun calling out to God to send someone to help him!

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We don't know. But what we do know is that the Lord Jesus knew everything about this man and his illness. Just as the Lord knows each of us here today! **That is NOT because Jesus had E-S-P, but it is because Jesus is G-O-D!**

II. CONSIDER THE PROBLEM THAT THIS MAN HAD. (Vs. 6-13)

This certain man laid by the pool with what can clearly be described as a false hope in thinking that someday he might be able to slip into the pool and find healing before someone else in the multitude beat him to it. In reality, it wasn't going to happen!

He had faith in the wrong thing! He was trusting in his ability to be able to get into the waters as they stirred so he could be healed! His hope was in these waters instead of to the Lord!

We're not told exactly how close to the healing pool he may have managed to get, but he always came up short because of his physical condition. He was too weak and too feeble to help himself and there was no one there to help him!

The pool may only have been a relatively short distance away, (inches or feet) but in his impotent condition, it just as well have been miles.

When one comes up short of a goal, it doesn't really matter how short of the goal they come!

Spiritually speaking, there are many today who are like this *certain man* who was impotent in that they are trying to achieve the righteousness of God on their own even though in their heart they know they are continually coming up short!

Though they expend all the effort they can muster, they still fall short of the goal. *Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* And it doesn't matter how short one comes. To come up short at all is to fail! Only Jesus can help where we fall short!

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This certain man here admitted to Jesus two problems he had. The Lord asked, ***"Wilt thou be made whole?" (Vs 6)*** The man **not** recognizing that Jesus could heal him said, ***"Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." (Vs 7)***

Can you imagine his patience, but also his frustration, in such a dilemma? In answering Jesus, he was admitting his total inability to help himself in any fashion or even to find any help in others.

When a person Spiritually comes to the place that he knows that he cannot save himself, he then is in position to trust the One Who can.

The *"movement of the waters"* gave this man false hope. Even if the waters at Bethesda had healing value at these particular times that the water was stirred, for this man they just as well not. For he in thirty-eight years could never get there. He needed someone that really could help him. And Jesus gave Him more than he expected!

It was Jesus who said, ***"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (v. 8).***

This man who had lain in weakness for so many years (a condition that is later revealed by Jesus to have been brought on by his own sinfulness) had instantaneously and miraculously been healed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 5:8 says, "And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath."

He simply obeyed the authoritative Word of Jesus. But then the *"religious crowd,"* the Jewish leaders, accused him and Jesus of violating the Sabbath. They religiously had become a law unto themselves. There was no rejoicing on their part, only criticism. It revealed the true spiritual condition of these critics.

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Before the man was healed, in strength he was powerless and in hope he was pitiful. After his healing he was walking and worshiping. The Lord found him in the Temple.

And that is where the Lord gave him a protective warning. *(Vs 14)*

III. CONSIDER THE PURPOSE OF WHAT HAPPENED HERE.

John 20:30-31 30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

A. To Reveal Jesus' Power!

Jesus power is the very power of God!

In 38 years nothing and nobody had been able to help this man.

But in one act of obedience to Jesus Word, he was restored whole!

That's the Power of Jesus!

B. To Reveal Jesus' Person!

Jesus is the Christ, Son of God!

Jesus is the Promised Messiah of the Old Testament with all that the Old Testament revealed that He would be!

Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;"

C. To Regenerate People!

That believing ye might have life through his name.
Not that you might have physical healing, but life!