

Lighthouse Bible Church
December 2nd, 2012
John 5: 1 – 9
Healing on the Sabbath #1

Stand – Read – Pray

In our study of John so far, we have seen Jesus come on to the scene being presented by John the Baptist as ‘the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’. He began to have a following that steadily grew and grew because of what He was teaching and because of the signs and wonders and miracles He was performing.

The first evidence recorded in John of His power was seen in His ability to see Nathanael under the tree before He ever met him which caused Nathanael to say ‘you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel’.

Then we see Jesus in Chapter two turn water into wine in Cana of Galilee. We see Him also in Jerusalem at the end of chapter two doing **many signs** which were attested to by Nicodemus in Chapter 3. We see Him in His omniscient power of knowing the life of the Samaritan woman at the well, having never met her before, causing her to say ‘could this be the Christ’.

And last time we saw Him miraculously heal the nobleman’s son who was 20 miles away with just a mere spoken word. And in all of these recorded miracles and healings we never read anything about the reaction of the people who witness them, other than it created a curiosity in them and a labeling of Jesus as a miracle worker.

And if you think about it, the more miracles that Jesus did the greater the following that He had. In **Matthew 9: 31 & 33** it says, after giving a blind man sight and a casting out a demon in another **the news spread about Him in all the land and it was never seen like this in Israel.**

These crowds followed Him because He was healing their sick, lame and maimed, raising their dead, giving sight to their blind, casting out demons from possessed people. And while He was doing that, He was preaching the kingdom of heaven.

And a lot of people followed Him, not to become children of God by believing who Jesus was, they followed Him because He kept them full with food and healthy from sickness and disease. Jesus will say to them later in **John 6: 26** **most assuredly I say to you, you seek Me, no because you saw the signs** (that would lead you to believe who I am **but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.**

But not everyone one was accepting of Jesus and the miracles that He did. We begin to see this in John Chapter 5 as the religious leaders express their contempt and hatred for Him because of His healings and miracles done on, what the hypocritical religious leaders said was, the most important day of the week, the Sabbath.

John now begins to record the hostility and anger directed at Jesus because of what He says and because of what He does and when He does it. Their hostility and anger will become contagious amongst the Jewish people, because those who are now hailing Him as a miracle worker, in just about a year from then will be saying 'crucify Him, crucify Him'.

Remember, He is back in Jerusalem now and remember what He did last time He was there? He went into the temple and turned over the tables of the money changes and chased out all the animals and the people.

The people, and in particular the religious leaders, are not going to receive Him with open arms, they are not going to receive Him as the Messiah, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world or as the Savior of the world. He is going to be received with growing contempt, anger, jealousy, persecution and hatred that will eventually lead to His death.

Jesus' rejection and condemnation of the self-righteous Jews and religious leaders and His unwillingness to conform to their man-made Sabbath rules and regulations just added to their hatred of Him. Jesus chooses this particular day to do this miracle because He is intentionally going against the Jewish traditions of the Sabbath law. Let's see how it unfolds in Chapter 5 starting in Verse One.

Verse One: after this there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John says that **after this**, after His time in Galilee which was a little over a year, of which John only records the healing of the nobleman, Jesus leaves and heads back south to Jerusalem. The reason He is going back there is because there was **a feast of the Jews** and He wanted to be there for that.

As we have seen before there were 3 feasts that all Jewish males had to attend in Jerusalem. John doesn't name which one it is because that is not the focus of what he is presenting here. *3 Feasts – Passover, Tabernacles, & Pentecost (wks)*

Jesus upheld what the scriptures had to say when it came to what He was supposed to do. He didn't violate that, He violated the traditions of men that took the place of the word of God. *Deut 16: 16, Exodus 23: 17, 34: 23 on attending.*

Verse Two: Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate, a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having 5 porches.

This **Sheep Gate** was probably on the N.E. side of the walled in portion of the city of Jerusalem and probably near the temple because the sheep would be taken in through this gate and into the temple to be sacrificed. You can read in **Nehemiah 3 and 12** about the Sheep Gate and different gates at Jerusalem during their rebuilding program of Nehemiah's times.

Somewhere near this Sheep Gate is a **pool** called **Bethesda** and it had **5 porches**. The word for pool there is *koulambethra* from *kolumbao* which means to dive into. So this was a fairly large pool, big enough to dive into and it had **5 porches**.

There was an archeologist named Schick back in 1888 who supposedly excavated the area thought to be where the pool was and it says "he found twin pools, one 55 feet long and the other 65 feet long. The former on was arched in by five arches with 5 corresponding porches". *Pictorial Bible Encl. page 551.*

That would account for what **Verse 3:** says; **in these**, in these porches, **lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.**

There were a lot of people sitting around this pool, on these porches, waiting for the moving of the water. Some of your versions may have a number or asterisk or brackets next to verse 3 continuing through verse 4 and some of your versions may not have it in there at all. *The NKJV and NASB yes, NIV, ESV, Message no*

Verses 5 -6: Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, do you want to be made well?

Jesus is walking by this pool and He sees a multitude of people lying around who are sick and blind and lame and paralyzed and he focuses on just one of them, this man who had **an infirmity** for 38 years. His infirmity was that he could not walk and hadn't been able too for 38 years.

As I was studying this verse I asked myself the question, how did this man, who couldn't walk, how could others who couldn't see or were paralyzed get there. Presumably someone had to bring them there. That's not unusual when you think about what happened in **Matthew 9: 6** & **Mark 2: 9** when the people brought the paralytic to Jesus through the roof.

Remember in **Luke 16: 20** with the rich man and Lazarus, it says that Lazarus **was laid at his gate**. So it was probably common for family or friends or those merciful people to bring them to a place that they though would benefit them.

Notice that it says **Jesus KNEW that he already had been in that condition a long time**. Jesus knew because He is the omniscient, all knowing, God in human form.

Notice what Jesus says to the man at the end of Verse 6; **do you want to be made well?** He obviously does or he wouldn't be at the pool and say what he says in the next verse. Even after 38 years, he still has a desire to walk again, to live a somewhat normal life again. Out of all the people Jesus could have approached there, He approaches this man and begins a conversation with him about his infirmity. Jesus, **in** talking with this man, is showing the love of God for one in need and He is about to meet that need.

He is taking this man from an understanding of His love for him, to an understanding of His power to an understand of His person, who He is. So the man says, rather hopelessly, in Verse 7.

Verse 7: the sick man answered Him ‘sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.

He says every time the water is **stirred up** I try to make my way down in there but before I can, someone else gets in there before me. I can never get in their **first** to experience the healing of the water. Then look what happens in Verse 8

Verses 8 - 9 Jesus said to him ‘rise, take up your bed and walk. And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed and walked.

Jesus commands this man to **rise** and to **walk**. He hadn’t walked for 38 years and at the mere spoken word of Jesus, it says **the man was MADE well**. It was a miraculous healing, once again, showing the Jesus is God in human form.

By the way, have you ever watched any of these would be healers of today on television, who make such claims of having the power of God to heal? They never take on the blind or paralyzed or those with obvious broken bones or deformed extremities. They take on the headaches and back pain and they may even claim to make someone walk again.

But, there escape from being labeled a fraud when the healing doesn’t work, and it never does, is what? ‘You didn’t have enough faith’. That is always there only answer to support their deception. And by the way, when Jesus heals, it is always instantaneous and complete and obvious and not gradual unless He is teaching someone through the healing.

Well, look at this passage, this man had no idea who Jesus was. He had no faith whatsoever and yet Jesus chose to heal him, independent of what this man believed or didn't believe or how he lived or didn't live his life in faith. And out of all the people there, He sovereignly chose this man. He didn't choose this man for his faith He chose this man to heal that produced in him faith.

Listen, there is a parallel truth here that we need to understand. What just happened in the physical realm with this man being saved from his physical infirmity, God does in the spiritual realm of saving a person from their sin to saving faith to those whom He chooses, whether anyone believes or not or how they live there life.

Think of the Apostle Paul, he was a blasphemer and injurious in killing Christians and hated Christ and yet Christ comes to him and saves him. Time after time, in scripture, people are healed and saved and transformed by the grace of God in Christ, never having believed or had any kind of faith whatsoever.

I look at my own life and how God chose me on April 19th, 1981 to save me.

Think about this, it says that there were a multitude of sick, blind, lame and paralyzed people there. Could not Jesus have said 'ok everyone listen up, you lame and paralyzed get up and walk, you blind people open your eyes and see'. Yes He could have but look ahead to **Verse 21 for as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to WHOM HE WILL.**

Listen, it is the sovereign choice of God to heal whom He will and to save whom He wills. We have not part in that. The man didn't display any kind of faith or goodness in his life deserving of that healing, Jesus just chose to heal him. I didn't display any faith or goodness in my life deserving of saving faith, Jesus just chose to save me.

We are all dead in our trespasses and sins and enemies of God and Jesus just chose us to be saved. Nothing we did or can do, only the sovereign word and work of God almighty.

Verse 8 says that after Jesus told him to take up his bed and walk, immediately the man was made well and took up his bed and walked. Have you ever been through or known any that has been through physical therapy after any injury or operation.

It may takes weeks or months to get back your full range of motion as you fight through the pain of the recovery. This man was infirm for 38 years and Jesus says rise up and walk. What incredible faith this man must have had, that was instilled in him by Jesus, to just stand up and walk.

He doesn't say 'yea right, who are you, I haven't been able to walk for 38 years'. He doesn't argue or anything, it just says he got up and walked. Listen to this, when Christ speaks or commands it demands a response. He couldn't have ignored Him or disbelieved Him, he was compelled to do what Christ said of him.

The man somehow new that he was made well because, notice what he does, he **took up his bed** first. He knew he wasn't going to be laying back down on that bed waiting for the stirring of the water, he knew that he was healed. Then he get's up and walks away.

This man trusted in the power of Christ's spoken word to heal him and allow him to walk. Why did he trust Christ and do what He said? Because he believed He was the Messiah? No! Because he believed He was the Savior of the world? No! Because he believed He was the Son of God, God in human form? No! What did he believe? He believed the command of this man to walk and he did it, not knowing who this man was.

This was a miracle of the creative, restorative power of God in human form. This is the miracle of God's divine sovereign choosing of whom He will. This is the miracle of the saving grace of God extended to and received by this man who was not looking for it. He restored his atrophied muscles and organs and limbs and veins and whatever else had been infirm for those 38 years. He recreated a whole new body.

Think about this, undoubtedly many in that multitude watched on as this man got up and began walking. People who had been coming to this pool time and time again looking over at each other in their infirmities, maybe even conversing with one another.

And all of a sudden, this man takes up his bed and walks away. Can you imagine what they were all thinking that could see this happening? Wow! By the way, his bed was probably nothing more than a mat made of some material that could be rolled up and carried under his arm.

I am going to stop right here so that we can approach the Lord's table and as we do, I trust that you who are born again believers here this morning realize and remember God's sovereign choosing of you for salvation. And it was through Christ's death, burial and resurrection that you were healed from your life-long infirmity of sin.

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John 6: 26

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Verse 2: The Pool of Bethesda

Nehemiah 3
Nehemiah 12

Verses 3 - 4: The moving of the water

Verses 5 – 6: Do you want to be made well

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Verses 7 – 9 Rise, take up your bed & walk

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