

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 5

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the gospel of John.

And we are in the portion of John's gospel where John gives us an account of several notable encounters that Jesus had with individuals who found themselves with a desperate need.

We have looked at Nicodemus in chapter 3, the Samaritan woman and the nobleman in chapter 4 – and here in chapter 5, we will be looking at Jesus' encounter with the lame man at the pools in Bethesda.

Let's pray...

[Jhn 5:1-15 NKJV] 1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Two weeks ago, as we finished chapter 4, we saw Jesus up in Cana – in the region of Galilee -

Once again, Galilee is the region where Jesus spent most of His three year ministry in.

This is the region where Jesus performed most of His miracles in.

However, John is very selective on which miracles or which signs he includes in the gospel by his name.

He chose signs and miracles that reveal to us the character and nature of God.

So here in chapter 5, John tells us that Jesus returned to Jerusalem –

He doesn't identify which feast this was.

Remember, the Jewish men were required to go to Jerusalem to observe these feasts

Passover, where the Jews remembered their deliverance from Egypt

Pentecost – when the Jews celebrate when the Law was given to them by God. - in our

Wednesday night study, we saw this past Wed how Paul was determined to get to Jerusalem to observe this feast.

Feast of Tabernacles – when the people lived in tents (“tabernacles”) and God lived in the center of their camp.

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep [Gate] a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

The Sheep Gate was just north of the Temple Mount and this is the gate where the sacrificial sheep were brought through on their way to the Temple. That is how it got its name.

And just inside this gate was a small reservoir or pool – known as the “Pool of Bethesda”

The word Bethesda – means “House of mercy or House of grace”

3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Now, depending on the bible translation that you have – some of your bibles don’t even have the last portion of verse 3 and all of verse 4.

Does anyone have a NLT or NIV?

The reason for verse 3 and 4 not being there has to do with what manuscripts were used for the translation.

Fortunately, verse 3 and 4 have nothing to do with doctrine. So we shouldn’t be concerned that we don’t have verse 3 or 4.

Now, John tells us that these sick people – they would sit around the pool of Bethesda and wait for the moving water.

And the belief or the superstition during this time was that God would send an angel to stir the water. Once people saw water move, they would jump in the pool and the first one to touch the water would be healed.

Now, this is the reason that some of the translations do not include verse 3 and 4.

Did John really believe that God was sending an angel down to stir the water or was John simply letting the reader know about what the people believed during this time?

5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

John introduces us to this certain man.

This man had an infirmity – we just don't know what infirmity it was.

You see, the word that John uses for infirmity is the word for - to be weak, to be feeble, to be without strength, to be powerless

It is a vague word that John uses – and we should make not of that because it could describe you or me.

This man had been dealing with this infirmity for 38 years –

This doesn't mean that he had been coming to the pools for 38 years – however, based upon the conversation that will take place – we know he had been coming for a while -

6 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?"

Do you want to be made well???? – think about the question that Jesus asked the man.

At first glance, it seems like an insensitive question.

Do you want to be made well???? No duh!

The guy has been lame for almost 40 years

He sitting in the only place where healing is at all likely

So why does Jesus ask this guy if he wants to be healed?

That seems like a no-brainer when we read it!

That is – until we look closer to what Jesus asked.

Because the Greek word that Jesus uses here for “Do you want” – it means to be resolved, to purpose, determined

What Jesus is really asking the lame man is “Do you really want to get well?”

What we have seen over the past couple of weeks during these divine appointments that Jesus had with these individuals is that He has the tendency to say exactly what people needed to hear.

Think about what Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well – “go tell your husband”

I don’t have a husband – and Jesus her, “You got that right”

Did this lame man really desired to be healed?

Jesus asked the question because it’s possible for someone to so identify with their infirmity, to so identify with their brokenness and to so identify with their need, that they STOP desiring deliverance.

You see church, we can become so accustomed to our handicap, or our weakness, or addiction, or failure, whatever the manifestation of our fallenness, that we make it our identity.

Healing & deliverance would mean seeing ourselves differently.

Healing and deliverance would mean that we may not get the attention that we do because of our infirmity

We might not particularly like our affliction, but we’ve become real comfortable with the identity our affliction has produced.

And having to shed that identity for something new and unknown is scary for a lot of people – therefore, they don’t really want to be made well.

But didn’t Jesus find the lame man at the pools in Bethsada –

Doesn’t this show that he had the desire to be made well?

Not exactly, he's been going there for so long that that he has made it a habit.

That is where all his crippled friends hang out – they share in each other's misery, go through the motions – watch as others go in the pool and repeat the same thing day after day and week after week – never really wanting to get healed.

Now for the application church -

Why are we all here this morning?

This assembly is the Pool of Bethesda.

This is the House of God's Grace

And when we come together, it is not to sit around the edge of the pool – but we come to bathe in the waters of God's cleansing and healing Word.

So let me ask a question – did we come here out of habit or did we come here to get healed?

You see church; all of us have some lameness, some brokenness, some infirmity we need God to heal.

And Jesus is asking every one of us this morning

Do you want to be made well?

Do you really want to be made well?

Because if we suffer from bitterness in our lives – deliverance means no longer blaming others

If we suffer from anger issues – deliverance means no longer blaming everything on your bad temper

Again – do you really want to be made well or have we decided to simply live with our infirmity

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."

Jesus asked the man a simple question – do you want to be made well

And what was the sick man's response – to come up with excuses.

He had his excuse lined up already –

"I'm lame! Someone always beats me."

There's no end to the excuses people give for why they haven't changed.

If the excuse doesn't blame someone else, then it's because of our inability.

But the end is always the same – "I can't! I don't have what it takes to overcome my limitations."

By the way, before we move on.

Do you know how much faith this guy has at this point? Zero, nada

As we will see in a few verses – he doesn't even know who he is talking to.

He didn't say, "Jesus, I want to be made whole, can you do it?"

He has no faith whatsoever –

Kind of throws a monkey wrench on the so called faith healers that always tell you that your healing depends on how much faith you have – cuz this guy has no faith.

8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." 9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

Jesus issued a command to the sick man

He commanded him to get up and do what he had been unable to do before.

Rise, take up your bed and walk

Now, the sick man had a choice to make – he could continue to stay where he was – he could continue to make excuses or he could walk in obedience to the command that Jesus gave to him.

The sick man chose to obey – he stood up, picked up his mat he slept in and began walking.

Church,

God never calls us to do a thing without first giving us the ability to do it.

His command is His enabling.

But we must realize His enabling carries with it the necessity of obedience on our part.

Why did Jesus command him to take up his bed?

Because Jesus didn't want him to have a provision for failure.

He didn't want the man to leave his mat there and if things got too hard he would have a place to return to.

The days of sitting around the pool – were done.

You see church, God does not heal the lame man so he can go on sitting on his mat among the lame.

In the same way, God does not save us from sin so we can go on living in sin among the lost.

He gives us new life so that we can walk in its newness. Never to return to that mat / never to return to the place of bondage.

At the end of verse 9, John makes a point that all of this took place on the Sabbath.

Why did Jesus heal this sick man on the Sabbath?

He could have waited a day or two – the man wasn't dying.

He wasn't going anywhere

He could have done it the day before.

Why the Sabbath?

I personally believe that Jesus did it on the Sabbath because not only did He want to heal this guy – He also wanted to heal the nation of its false worship.

He wanted to reach the nation – and how do you reach a nation?

You confront them right where they are at.

10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

Turn with me to Exodus 31

[Exo 31:12-14 NKJV] 12 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it [is] a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that [you] may know that I [am] the LORD who sanctifies you. 14 'You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for [it is] holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does [any] work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

Turn to your right a few pages to chapter 35

[Exo 35:2 NKJV] 2 "Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.

In Exodus 31 and 35

These three verses we looked at – God gave His people the command to not work on the Sabbath.

The rabbis and the scribes took these verses and out of the one command – they turned it into 39 different categories of things that were allowed and not allowed on the Sabbath.

- What distance was the acceptable distance to walk on the Sabbath and what distance was considered work
- There were even rules regarding eating – if I had radish, I was allowed to dip it in salt but I was not allowed to leave it in there too long because then it would be considered pickling – which was considered work.
- There was also a limit on how much someone could carry on the Sabbath before it was considered work.

This is what the religious rulers were all worked up about.

They see him carrying his mat on the Sabbath – he is violating the law, in their eyes.

Their religiosity has blinded them of the work that God has performed.

And church that is what religion does.

The focus is never on the people or the work that God is doing through the people – the focus is always on whether or not someone is abiding by man's rules.

“Why are you carrying your bed – it is the Sabbath!!!!”

But I haven't walked in 38 years

“It is the Sabbath!!!”

Instead of praising God and rejoicing with this man, they get all critical and bent out of shape that he was breaking their own traditions.

See here the corruption common to all men.

More often than we'd like to admit, we reject the Word of God for the commandments of men and think ourselves to be incredibly spiritual people when in reality we're doing nothing but adding sin to sin by going beyond what the Scripture calls for.

11 He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' "

“Hey religious rulers, I was simply following instructions”

He who made me well – that guy gave me three commands, stand up, pick up my mat and walk – I am just being faithful to what he told me.

In other words, 'It wasn't my idea to pick up my bed and walk on the Sabbath, it was the guy who healed me. If you're going to blame anyone for this, blame Him.'

He's throwing Jesus under the bus.

12 Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" 13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in [that] place.

Notice that the religious rulers do not ask, who is the man who healed you

They want to know the name of the person who commanded the man to break one of their precious rules.

But the sick man didn't know who Jesus was because Jesus had slipped away as soon as the man was healed.

Think about the contrast between Jesus and so called modern day faith healers.

The so called modern faith healer is going to make sure that everyone knows his/her name.

He is going to make sure that to give you his/her calling card.

Because it is all about them

However, Jesus simply sneaked out.

14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Later on, we find the lame man in the temple – he is probably giving an offering to God since he has not walked in 38 years.

And notice, Jesus is the one who found him – he didn't go looking for Jesus, Jesus found him.

And Jesus tells him – you have been made well - The phrase, "you have been made well" is in the perfect tense which means something lasting.

Your healing is permanent – that is what Jesus told him.

However, Jesus then warned the man that he must not return to his sin or something even worse than lameness may come upon him.

Jesus is not telling this man to stop sinning altogether. No one can do that. Jesus is pointing to a specific sin this fellow had been guilty of.

This implies that the lameness he suffered from for 38 years – it was the result of sin.

Now, not all trouble is a result from sin –

We are going to see an example in a few weeks of this

In John 9 - The disciples asked Jesus about a blind man – why was he blind? The disciples assumed that someone had sinned, but Jesus clarified that it wasn't because of sin.

In fact God wanted to be glorified in the blind man. (John 9)

15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

If you read many of the commentaries – many of the authors will throw this lame man under the bus.

They will make the claim that he somehow tattled on Jesus and as a result of the tattle – the religious rulers began to conspire against Jesus and it eventually led to His death.

John tells us in verse 15 – that the man goes out and tells the religious rulers who had made him well – he didn't tell them who told him to pick up his bed.

Remember, that is who they were looking for.

I don't think the man ratted Jesus out. I think the man testified to them what Jesus had done in his life.

Church, when was the last time, you had a conversation with someone and share with someone that Jesus made you well???

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

