



John 5:1-15
“Jesus Saves”

“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, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. 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. 5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. 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?” 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.” 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. 10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.” 11 He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’ ” 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 ” 13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well.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.” 15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.”

Background and archaeological find.

Archaeologist Conrad Schick discovered a large tank located some 100-feet northwest of St. Anne’s Church, at the start of the Via Dolorosa in the Muslim Quarter of the old city of Jerusalem. Schick specialized in water systems in ancient Jerusalem and soon discovered that the tank fit John’s “five porches” description. Indeed, it was made up of two basins separated by a wall, adding up to five “walls.”

Upon closer archaeological study, the function of the two separate basins started to unfold. The southern basin, featuring a set of broad steps, served as a mikveh (a bath used for ritual immersions in Judaism) while the northern basin, which was larger in size, served as a reservoir to continually replenish the water of the lower pool.

Bethesda was a swimming bath with five porticos, which many believed was only a literary creation, however the archaeological discovery proved beyond doubt that the description of the Gospel was not a creation, and instead an accurate description of the location near the Sheep Gate, and details of the five porticos pool, with rushing water. All the details uncovered of the pool were corroborated through literary and archaeological evidence affirming the historical accuracy of the Gospel of John.

J Vernon McGee comments that "Chapter 5 brings us to this very wonderful incident of the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Actually, in a sense, this miracle is the turning point in the ministry of Christ. You see, this miracle set the bloodhounds of hate on His track, and they never let up until they put Him to death on the cross

This pool called Bethesda, "House of Mercy," seems to have been the Jerusalem hospital.

Verses 1-4

I would like to ask **7 questions** in trying to understand this story this morning.

➤ **WHO KNEW?**

Verse 5

It is notable that the average life expectancy in Jesus' day is said to be between 30-40 years

It seems like many people must have known of the man's plight.

Or I might ask **who noticed?**

Ill. Boston- man without legs

J Vernon McGee - Many years ago when I was pastor in Pasadena, I went up one year to speak at the Preventorium where little fellows and girls who had

weak lungs or tuberculosis were cared for. They presented an Easter program. There was one little fellow there who quoted this entire fifth chapter of John, all forty-seven verses. He made only one error and I always felt it wasn't much of an error. In John 5:3, he quoted it like this, "In these lay a great multitude of important folk." Quite a few people smiled when he said that. I got to thinking about it and realized he was correct. They were important. One of them caused the Lord Jesus to come to this place, and any of the others could have turned to Him. They were important to Him.

(John 1:47-48) and of the Samaritan woman (John 4:16-19)

➤ WHO CARED?

It seems like no one really cared. No friend at all.

We all long to have a friend- someone who cares.

Verse 7b- selfish people

Sometimes our busyness takes away our compassion. We fail to notice and to care.

III. Family relationships- marriage, siblings; Church relationships

"Would Every Non-Hurter Please Stand Up?"

He pointed out that people come to church wearing their best clothes & their best smiles.

Everybody looks happy, so we assume everything is okay.

BUT HE - suggests that we need to look beyond the facade & realize that the pews are full of hurting people.

He wrote,

- Over here is a family with an income of \$550 a week and an outgo of \$1,000.
- Over there is a family with two children who, according to their dad, are "failures." "You're stupid. You never do anything right," he is constantly telling them.
- The lady over there just found a tumor that tested positive. The Smith's little girl has a hole in her heart.
- Sam & Louise just had a nasty fight. Each is thinking of divorce.
- Last Monday Jim learned that he was being laid off.
- Sarah has tried her best to cover the bruises her drunken husband inflicted when he came home Friday night.

- That teen over there feels like he is on the rack, pulled in both directions. Parents & church pull one way, peers & glands pull the other.

"Then there are those of us with lesser hurts, but they don't seem so small to us: an unresponsive spouse, a boring job, a poor grade, a friend or parent who left us or is unresponsive ...on & on the stories go. The lonely, the dying, the discouraged, the exhausted, the fearful, they are all here."

Verse 6

➤ WHO ASKED?

Do you want a spanking? (gee dad I thought you'd never ask)

- Do you want me to take your car keys? (yes please take them)
- Do you want to go to bed without any dinner? (yes I do, and could I sleep on the floor too?)

You're in a mall parking lot with a coat hanger in the window of your car, "did you lock your keys in the car?"

"Nope, just washed it and I am hanging it to dry."

Your packing up your house, the yard is full of boxes and there's a Uhaul truck in the driveway. Your neighbor comes up and says, "Hey, you moving?"

"Nope. We just pack our stuff up once or twice a week to see how many boxes it will take."

You're out fishing and you come back with 3 coolers of fish... And a guy on the dock yells out to you, "Hey, you catch all those fish?"

Nope. "Talked them into giving up."

You have a flat tire. Your off on the side of the road changing it, someone pulls over and asks you, "Tire go flat?" "Nope. I was driving around and those other 3 just swelled right up on me."

You're staying late at work... and a co-worker looks at you and says, 'are you still here?' "Nope. I left 10 minutes ago."

This question was very perceptive.

Ill. Many are settled in the situation they live in.

Do you really want to be set free from pornography?
Do you really want to have an excellent marriage?
Do you really want to be motivated to serve God?

Do you really want...

- To be healed of those past hurts?
- To be set free from that secret sin?
- To overcome that addiction?
- Your marriage to be restored?
- To put down the bitterness and become a better person?
- To be reconciled to your kids?
- To get a handle on your tongue and anger?
- God to be the center of your finances?
- To overcome that negative and destructive attitude?
- Do you really want to be less fearful and more trusting

NO – the question is not as obvious as it first appears...

What do you REALLY want?

Many people are stuck in a rut in the condition they are in.

Asking questions is a way to demonstrate care.

Verse 7

➤ WHO HELPED?

Verses 8 and 9

It is easy to have the philosophy- let someone else help.

1 John 3:17-18

There are a lot of scammers in our world together that prey on the kindness of people.

Manipulators

[Matthew 9:6+](#) “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “**Get up, pick up** your bed and **go home.**” 7 And he got up and went home. 8 But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

[Mark 2:9-11+](#) “Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘**Get up, and pick up** your pallet and **walk**’? 10 “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, 11 “I say to you, **get up, pick up your pallet and go home.**”12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

Wiersbe - He commanded the man to do the very thing he was unable to do, but in His command was the power of fulfillment.

AND – many times we become convinced that as long as we have them we are not really going anywhere in life...

Lord, if you would just...

- Fix my marriage
- Do something with my finances
- Get my children to listen to me
- Help me overcome that hurt, habit or hang up
- If you would just remove all of this stress that has been piling up

when Jesus tells us to stand... why don't we stand...

- When he says we're forgiven – why do we still hold on to the guilt?
- When he says that He loves us and that we're valuable & matter to Him – why do we continue to doubt our worth, feel unloved and constantly go looking for both in all of the wrong places?
- When the one who clothes the flowers in the fields and feeds the birds in the air promises to provide for us/take care of us – why do we still worry so much about everyday life?
- When he offers us a peace beyond understanding – why do we choose instead internal conflict and turmoil?
- When he says that in all things we are MORE than conquerors - why do we continue to let hurts, habits and hang ups defeat us.

- When he says that in Him we are a new creation – why do we insist that in some ways we and others will never change.
- When he tells us that when we forgive that we are the ones who are set free... why do we stay locked behind the prison bars of bitterness.
- When Jesus says “put me first... and all things will be given” WHY – do we continue to hold back from him our talents, time and treasure...

– when Jesus says, **Get up, take up your mat and walk... I vote for let's do it...**

➤ WHO CRITICIZED?

Verses 10-13

- 1. Carrying**
- 2. Burning**
- 3. Extinguishing**
- 4. Finishing**
- 5. Writing**
- 6. Erasing**
- 7. Cooking**
- 8. Washing**
- 9. Sewing**
- 10. Tearing**
- 11. Knotting**
- 12. Untying**
- 13. Shaping**
- 14. Plowing**
- 15. Planting**
- 16. Reaping**
- 17. Harvesting**
- 18. Threshing**
- 19. Winnowing**
- 20. Selecting**
- 21. Sifting**
- 22. Grinding**
- 23. Kneading**
- 24. Combing**
- 25. Spinning**

- 26. Dyeing**
- 27. Chain-stitching**
- 28. Warping**
- 29. Weaving**
- 30. Unraveling**
- 31. Building**
- 32. Demolishing**
- 33. Trapping**
- 34. Shearing**
- 35. Slaughtering**
- 36. Skinning**
- 37. Tanning**
- 38. Smoothing**
- 39. Marking**

Someone has written that prohibition against bearing a burden even included one could not wear a wooden leg or even false teeth!

The false religion of Judaism, like all false systems, cannot change the inside, so it is left to manipulate life on the outside.

Chuck Swindoll - The quintessential legalists of Jesus' day were the Pharisees, a brotherhood of experts in religion. Legalism is an enemy. I declare that not just on the basis of Scripture; I have discovered its spirit-smothering capacity through experience. As a young believer seeking companions to share my spiritual journey, I found myself surrounded by a group of legalists and, without realizing it, I began to embrace their views. I started gauging the quality of my spiritual life and the lives of others by a list of dos and don'ts, measuring everyone's worth in terms of performance and achievement. I wanted to pursue spiritual excellence, but I thought I could do it on my terms, as though righteousness depended completely upon my efforts. Instead of experiencing greater joy in my relationship with Christ, I became critical and judgmental. I gradually turned into a harsh, negative, rigid spirit. Freedom was gone. Worship was flat. Service was drudgery. I didn't realize it at the time, but that environment of legalism was smothering me.

We need more cheerleaders in the church today!

➤ WHO CHECKED?**Verse 14**

FOR – that wellness to be reality....

Acknowledge & identify your mat

The problem in your life, that is keeping you from walking in newness of life...

- It may be your marriage
- It may be your tongue or temper
- It may be your finances
- It may be a hurt, hang up or a habit (an addiction)
- It may be fear or worry, doubt or insecurity

THEN – there is something we must do in order to accept Jesus offer of wellness.

NOW – for you picking up your mat might mean....

- Going over to your spouse some time today and taking ownership of your part of the mess your marriage is in without reminding them of the part they own
- Going to marriage counseling
- Trusting God and taking Him at his word and honoring with the first fruits of your wealth each week when the plate is passed (Pr 3:9)
- Talking to a trusted brother or sister about the struggle your are having or about the hurt, habit, attitude or hang up you want to overcome.
- Getting out of the boat and doing the thing you know that God is asking you to do
- Forgiving the person who wronged you and letting go
- Picking up your bible so can begin meeting Jesus for yourself

YOU KNOW – I think most of us already know what we need to do... WE – just have not been willing to do it

BUT – if we don't know... we can be sure that God will tell us if we ask Him...

YOU SEE – this guys story did not end with his healing at the pool.
Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him,

find is in the present tense and indicates that Jesus was looking and searching for the man.

- He was looking for Him, Jesus had a much higher purpose for this man than the MERE healing of his legs...

FAR too many people get themselves hung up on this verse, trying to figure out if this man's illness was due to some previous sin, that he was now continuing in...And in getting caught up in this theological debate, that no one will ever know the answer to, they miss the beauty, power and the true impact of this verse.

You see, the question is do you ‘really’ want to get well?
Or do you just want Jesus to remove a problem from your life?
Do you want to be able to sing,
“It is well with my legs or with my soul?”

NOW – the awesome thing about Jesus is that many times HE takes care of a problem in our life, SO THAT – He can show us what we really need...

AND – what we really need is – a radical, personal, on fire relationship with Him.
LISTEN – the King of Glory wants to do so much more than rescue you from your problems...

The problem ultimately

- Is not our job
- Is not that our business is doing bad
- Is not our marriage or the health problems we our suffering
- Is not our finances or our kids
- Is not our hurts, habits our hang ups...

AND YES – Jesus can take care of those...

AND BECAUSE – He loves us so much and is full of compassion, He often does
BUT JESUS – wants to do so much than take away your problems. HE – wants to take you to HIMSELF...

WHICH – will always take you to: wellness and wholeness... and make you – healthy, sound... unbroken and undamaged...

➤ WHO TESTIFIED?

Verse 15

Dr. H. A. Ironside said, “We are all like these impotent people gathered by the pool.” We have all been sick in sin and blind to God. We cannot in and of ourselves walk tall and straight in the righteous ways of God. This is God’s verdict of us all that we are sick, blind, lame and withered by sin and none of us are in any position to debate with God about this point. We were all spiritually dry and dead and that is exactly the kind of person Jesus Christ loves to touch. There is a fountain that can heal any sinner from their sins. It is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.