

John 5:1–9

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, 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.

“A Man Who Deserved Nothing” **John 5:1-15**

INTRO:

In the process of studying the Bible we need to ask, “*Why is this here?*” This is especially true in studying the Gospel of John. John told us in **John 20:31**, ***“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.”*** John did not give us a complete overview of the life of Christ in his Gospel. Rather, he chose the miracles and discourses he records in his book to give us a special insight into who Jesus is and why He came.

As we begin our study in **John 5:1-15**, we need to understand out of all the miracles Jesus performed, why John picked this one to include here. The discourse which flowed

from this sign may be the reason. This account centered upon the actions of two people.

I. A Man Who Deserved Nothing (v. 1-5)

II. A Savior Who Gave Him Grace (v. 6-9)

I. A Man Who Deserved Nothing (v. 1-5)

“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 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 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?”

John 5:1–6

A. We follow Jesus back to Jerusalem after the events of **John 4**. We find Him at a pool called Bethesda in Jerusalem. John set the scene

1. There are five porches by this pool which are filled with suffering humanity. John describes them in **verse 5**. They are sick, blind, lame, and withered.
2. Although John did not record what the scene sounded like, without modern painkillers, these people probably were moaning and crying out. So, we not only see multitudes of suffering people, we also hear them crying out and groaning under the burden of their illness.
3. They came there for healing. They believed there was a special healing power in this pond. This was not an act of the living God, probably more a pagan belief. They believed, if they could be the first to plunge into the pool when the water was troubled, they would be healed.

B. From this broad picture of the situation at the pool of Bethesda, John zoomed in on one man (**v. 5**). John did not focus on him because he was anything special. He picked him out for special attention because Jesus selected him.

1. This man was no different from the many others sitting there suffering and waiting for the water to move. He was just the one Jesus chose to heal.
2. We are told some interesting things about him. **(1)** We are told he has been ill for 38 years. That is a long time to be suffering a disabling illness. But there is nothing to indicate that there were not some folks who suffered longer. **(2)** We also learn the man who Jesus healed at times indulged in a little self-pity. When Jesus asks him if he wanted to be made well, he replied complaining about his

lack of someone to get him to the pool. This was not much different from something we might do if we found ourselves in a similar situation.

C. In fact, there was nothing that we can see or detect which might draw our Lord to this man over the others in the sea of humanity there.

1. Some see in this man a desire to be healed and to rise above his circumstances. However, the man never expressed this desire.

2. Others say this man displayed faith and salvation. They then add that because Jesus saw the man's faith, it drew Christ to him. Yet, in our text there is absolutely no indication that this man ever had faith or was saved at all. Notice how after he is healed (v. 13) he didn't even know who it was who healed him. As far as I know, no one can be saved and not know who the Lord Jesus is. Further, when he learned who Jesus was, he immediately found the Pharisees and told them (v. 15).

3. The point of all of this is this man did not deserve to be healed more than anyone else waiting there. He was not more willing, nor did he exhibit any more faith. He was like everyone else there.

II. A Savior Who Gave Him Grace (v. 6-9, 14)

“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?’ 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 said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’” And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.” John 5:5-9

A. Yet, Jesus came to him and gave him grace. In **verses 6-9**, the focus of the passage turned away from the man and centered now upon the Savior. I think Jesus just walked up to him and began talking to the sick man.

1. Then almost as suddenly as He chose him, Jesus healed him. Notice, this healing did not require a magic spell. No incantation was used. No balm applied. Just as He did in the beginning when He created everything, He spoke and it was so. The divine imperative again transformed this man physically.

2. I have heard and read of some who find in the man's obedience the germ of faith, but I don't think it is here. When God in human flesh tells you to do something, you do it.

B. When Jesus stood in the boat and commanded the wind and the waves to be still, the wind and the waves obeyed. When He stood at the grave side and commanded life to return to Lazarus' body, his heart began to pump again, and his lungs started to

breathe again. Life returned and he walked out of the tomb. If wind, waves, life, lungs, and hearts obey the divine imperative, I don't think it's a stretch to think that people have to do this, too! He simply did what he was told to do.

C. If it is true this man never was saved, if it is true nothing distinguished this man from the others who were there sick and ailing that day, why did John record this for us? What is the purpose behind this miracle? There are at least two lessons we can learn.

1. The first lesson we need to learn is that in many ways we are like this man. We are totally helpless except the Lord enters into our lives. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot respond to the Gospel message, except God works in us first. We are totally dependent upon the grace of God. No matter how you look at this miracle, one amazing fact screams out at us. Jesus did not heal all of the people who were there. He chose one and healed him! The rest He left alone in their misery! We so easily forget what grace is. Grace is a favor or blessing which God gives to us that we do not earn nor deserve. Grace is never an obligation. God is not required to give grace to anyone. Justice is deserved. Grace is not.

2. The second lesson this teaches us is that we should be eternally thankful for the grace of God that saved us. We must never approach the Lord like the Pharisee in the parable in **Luke 18:11-14**. We are like other men and women are! The wonder isn't in us. It is that He saved us when we didn't deserve it. We read in **1 Timothy 1:12-17** the testimony of the Apostle Paul as he speaks about the Grace of God given to him.

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

Hymn #203 And Can It Be?