

"The Healing of the Crippled Man"

Part 1

John 5:1-18

Introduction: The last time we were in our study of John we looked at the 2nd miracle that John had recorded. It was the healing of the nobleman's son. We also considered that John recorded 7 signs/miracles to support the purpose of his letter. His purpose was to show that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that people would believe and be saved. Here are the 7 signs which John has recorded.

1. The water to wine. (John 2)
2. The healing of the nobleman's son. (John 4)
3. The healing of the crippled man. (John 5)
4. Feeding of the 5000. (John 6)
5. Jesus walks on water. (John 6)
6. The healing of the blind man. (John 9)
7. The raising of Lazarus. (John 11)

Tonight, in our study we have now come to the 3rd sign or miracle. This will be the healing of the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda. It will be this miracle that will ignite the hatred in the religious leaders because this miracle will be done on the Sabbath.

➤ The Miracle

Notice John 5:1-2

This miracle will take place during a feast celebration. We are not told which feast this is, but we are given details about where the miracle will take place. It will be inside the sheep gate by a pool called Bethesda.

Notice John 5:3

Around the pool and under the porch roofs there was a great multitude of people who were crippled. Let us keep in mind that in this day there were no hospitals nor were there any nursing homes in which the people could get the proper care. They

were brought by family members or friends to this pool. This pool was the size of an Olympic swimming pool. It was up to 40 feet deep in certain parts. The Bible does not tell us how many people were laying by the pool, but it does say there was a **great multitude**. Let us notice another passage that may give us a better understanding.

Matthew 15:33-38

*³³ And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill **so great a multitude**?*

³⁶ And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

³⁷ And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.

*³⁸ And they that did eat were **four thousand men, beside women and children**.*

Here in Matthew a **great multitude** was a reference to possibly 8-10 thousand people. The point is there were many crippled people lying around the pool.

Notice John 5:4

These people were waiting on an angel to come down and stir the water. Some teach that this verse should not be in the Bible but say it was added at a later date. Others say that this was all superstition and there was never any healing that happened at the pool. They say that it would be cruel for God to do this to these people who were not able to get to the water. I am one who will take the Bible for what it says. John gives no hint that this was just superstition. Notice the words of David Guzik. He has an interesting comment on whether the healing waters of the pool were real or not.

"If there were people genuinely healed by the waters of the Pool of Bethesda, it was one of many unusual occasions of healing in the Bible.

Some were healed by a purified pot of stew (2 Kings 4:38-41)

Naaman was healed by washing in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:10-14)

One was healed by touching the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13:20-21)

Some were healed when the shadow of Peter fell upon them (Acts 5:14-16)

Some were healed when Paul's handkerchiefs were laid upon them (Acts 19:11-12)

God can and does do things in unexpected ways."

Let us now consider the picture in these first four verses.

The multitudes that lay around the pool were a picture of the Jewish nation at that time. The physical condition of the people was a picture of the spiritual condition of the nation. Verse 3 describes the people as follows, **"impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water."**

✓ **They were impotent.**

They had the Law, but they had no means to keep it. They tried their best to work their way into the favor of God but fell far short. They had no strength to serve God. They were spiritually dead and therefore they were impotent/without strength or ability to please God.

✓ **They were blind.**

Not only were they impotent but they were blind to their own impotency. They were blind to their own desperate need. They were blind to the One who now stood in their midst even when He had performed many miracles that showed He was the Messiah. They saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him.

✓ **They were halt.**

This word refers to one who is unable to walk because he is lame or crippled. The Jews had the Law, but they could not walk in obedience to God's commands. They thought they could, but they came short of the glory of God. They modified much of the Law to fit their personal lives.

✓ **They were withered.**

This refers to the hands of those who laid by the pool. Their hands were withered and they could not use them to do any work. This was a picture of the Jewish nation for they could by no means produce any work that was acceptable to God. Because of sin they were completely incapacitated to work for God.

✓ **They were waiting.**

These people at the pool were waiting on the water to be stirred but the Jewish nation was waiting on the Messiah who was standing in their midst.

Now, we must not just apply this to the Jews because it also describes the entire human race. It describes our previous condition before we were saved, and it describes the present condition of the unsaved world. They too are impotent, blind, halt, withered, and waiting for the moving of the water. The unsaved world is powerless to please God, they are blind to their true condition, they are halt/unable to walk in a way pleasing to God, they are unable to do any work that is acceptable to God, and they are waiting on the water. How does this apply? These people at the pool had their hope in the pool. Much of the unsaved world today have their hope in religion, church membership, baptism, good works and the list goes on and on.

Notice John 5:5

Now the Spirit of God zeros in on one individual in the midst of the great multitude. This man has been in the present condition for 38 years. This will be the man who is healed.

Notice John 5:6

Jesus knew what this man had been through in his life. Jesus went to the man and asked him if he wanted to be made whole, in other words did he want to be healed. This question seems out of place because you and I would respond by stating that was why the man was there. But others have brought up some interesting thoughts. Sometimes those who were crippled were well supplied for as people would give money and food. To be healed would be to give this up and it would mean that the

man would need to go to work to provide what he needed. Notice the words of Barclay.

"An eastern beggar often loses a good living by being cured of his disease."

We do not know if that was the case with this man, but we do know that Jesus asked if he desired to be made whole and it was a sincere question.

Notice John 5:7

This man's focus and hope was resting in what could happen if he was the first to get to the pool. He had standing right in front of him the One who had the power to heal him but as we considered earlier the man was blinded to who Jesus was.

Application:

This man is a reminder of the lost state of people who are all wrapped up in religion. They have all their faith resting in some religious practice and they are completely blind to the finished work of Jesus Christ. They know about Jesus and they will tell you that Jesus died for the sins of the world, but their faith is not in Him, but it is in some religious practice which they hope will earn them forgiveness. Jesus is right in front of them, but they cannot see the way of salvation.

1 Corinthians 2:11-14

¹¹ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Notice John 5:8-9

Jesus commanded the man to rise and take his bed and walk. The man was immediately healed and he got up and walked.

Now I want to consider a few thoughts from this healing. In order to get to this man Jesus had to step over others. Jesus focused completely on this man. Jesus could have shouted out to all of the people and healed them all at the sound of His Word. But He only healed this man.

Conclusion/Application:

Have you ever been in a situation where you feel as though God has stepped over you? You face a situation in which you have no idea how you are going to get through and you pour out your heart to Him in prayer, but you get nothing. Then you watch someone else and God reaches into their lives and heals them or makes a way through their situation and you feel as though you have been stepped over. This leaves you frustrated and full of questions. Why does this happen? I have no answer for you in that situation. The bottom line is that we do not know why God heals one person and the person sitting beside of them is left to face a very difficult journey. We do not know why God fixes one person's struggle and allows another person to shed tears and lose sleep over their situation because it does not change. The question is, "How do we handle the times when we are stepped over?"

We must hold tightly on to the Truth that God is good and His ways are best even when I am allowed to face the trials of this life. When the times of life are not good, we must cling to the fact that He is good. David faced the same situations.

Psalm 22:1-5

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

² *O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

³ *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

⁴ *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*

⁵ *They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*