

John 5:1 – 24

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~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God will experience an incident with the Lord Jesus Christ in this report that is pure loveliness. We're stopping at the pool of Bethesda at the sheep gate in Jerusalem in this report, where we will encounter an impotent man hanging around a superstitious crowd of sick people on a feast day. There were three feasts each year in which all males were required to go to Jerusalem: Passover, Tabernacles and Pentecost. Most believe this would have been Pentecost – but we're not told. John tells us of the Passover in chapter two and the feasts of Tabernacles in chapter seven – so, who knows? I do know that I consider this miracle the turning point in Jesus earthly ministry, because this is where the bloodhounds of hate pick up His scent - and they dog Him from here to the end. I am sure Nicodemus' failure to recruit Jesus to the Pharisee's religion plays a part in their disdain for Him. I also think Nikki's place in the Pharisee's religious club was compromised from that point forward, and things just weren't the same with little Nikki after his encounter with Christ and failure to convert Him. Well, either way, the Pharisee's will turn it on hot and heavy from here until Jesus is dead on the cross....

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

~ Bethesda is known as the house of olives, the house of mercy and five porches. I believe it was a house of great mercy for some people. These were individuals who had absolutely no strength, no resources and likely no family. My personal belief is 'impotent' can be replaced with 'important - - people' - because someone had to be important to cause the Lord Jesus to

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come through there. Of course, anyone could have turned to Him that day - so, every single one of those people were important to Him. Jesus knew these were people who were without hope....

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

~ Verse four does not appear in our better manuscripts. Many people assume I don't believe in the inerrancy of Scripture when I make that statement, but I assure you I do believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God. If I didn't, I wouldn't teach the Bible properly, correctly and completely. No, I might piece together something sweet and make a lot of money. Friends – don't think I'm kidding. This is generally accepted in fundamental conservative theological scholarship as a note of explanation that was made by some scribe at some time. It is factual; but whether or not it belongs in Scripture is not the point for me. This is an objective word of explanation for what the people were looking for and why they were there.

I believe some psychological healings did, in fact, occur in Bethesda. I don't want to be dogmatic about that, but what we have are a bunch of people who are only sick in their minds. We have ignorant, superstitious people today who are absolutely sick in the head – there is no other way to categorize them. People go to faith healers and claim to have been healed; but whether they were ever really physically sick or acting out hypochondria is my question. The ones who go to the faith healer usually don't seem to stay healed, either. The Lord Jesus heals today just as He did in Bible times. The movement of the water is not part of this miracle, except in a spiritual context, which contains a message we endure from the acts of unbelievers....

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

~ I wonder if this man had been at the pool in Bethesda for all of those thirty-eight years. He is in an apparent state of total immobility, or very close to a completely paralyzed condition. I'm sure this was the worst case out of all the people. We're told his awful condition is the result of his own sin. When the Lord Jesus is done healing him in verse fourteen, Jesus will tell him to sin no more lest a WORSE thing happen. That should send alarm bells off for most people. Out of all of those beggars, this was the most destitute case and the dirtiest man there. His life was nothing but pure frustration and hopelessness. I think the impotent man was at least fifty-eight years old at this point, maybe older. We see him today waiting with his eyes fixed on the water; hoping against hope that, somehow or another, something will happen that will enable him to be the first one down there when it happened. Disappointment after disappointment was the mark of this man's day to day life. Every time others got in the water and not him, his mental deterioration worsened, and his wellbeing declined. This man saw what appeared to be many people cured before him. It is a horrible position, and hopeless was the condition the man at the pool of Bethesda is in....

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

~ It seems rather absurd to ask a sick man if he wants to be well, but that's exactly what Jesus asks this man. I think there were two reasons for this, and number one was to beget hope in a hopeless creature. I am sure the light of life was pretty much extinguished at this point. We see a man in despair, to be absolutely sure. The second reason is, actually, the primary reason; and that was to get this man's eyes off of the pool and onto the True and Living God. I'm sure this man didn't look around much – he just kept his eyes fixated on that water. This impotent man must have naturally thought to himself 'what kind of a question is that?' This man's whole problem is that there was no one to put him in the water.

This is the condition of a great many people today. I'm bold enough to say it's the condition of every single one of us right now as I type and as you read this report. The modern Christian is waiting for some huge emotional

wave to move and sweep over them and engulf them. Then, there are those who postpone a decision for Christ until they have some thrilling experience. They are not willing to turn to God because they are sinners, they only seek some benefit; and the thing they are seeking will never, ever come to pass. God says He will see to it. They oppose the will of God - they just cannot recognize it because they are wholly ignorant of the Bible. That's the destitute spiritual condition of most people in this modern day and age. Many people have their eyes on business in expectancy of becoming monetarily secure as quickly as possible. I remember hearing about a group of oil investors that invested everything and sat around watching a dry well. They didn't have water moving – they didn't have anything moving. These people had their eyes on the physical. When it didn't work out, hopes were dashed - and family fortunes were lost in the meantime.

Even some very well-meaning Christians become entranced by material luxuries, and they immediately lose sight of the Lord Jesus Christ. Others are looking to an individual to make something come alive in their lives. These people have usually witnessed or heard of the experience of someone else - and they are looking for that. They're in for bitter disappointment. Those are the ones whose faith becomes shipwrecked on the lost isle of hopelessness. We have many people in many categories - all waiting with their eyes fixed on something other than Christ. They are fixated on all the wrong things and all the wrong individuals. We need to ask ourselves if we fall into either of these Christian Tragedy categories, my beloved. The Thessalonians turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God! In order for them to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, they had to turn from the things of Thessalonica. Well, no one had ever asked this man if he was sure he wanted to be saved before, because no one cared about this man at all....

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir; I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

~ Friends, we're looking at a broken, poor, helpless, homeless and lonely man. He doesn't believe he will ever be made whole again. If this man could only get in the pool at the right time, everything would be okay – in his mind. Well, the Lord Jesus had no notion of getting him anywhere near the pool. In fact, the Lord Jesus is planning to get the man out of five porches and away from this nonsense. The moment this man took his eyes off the waters of Bethesda and placed them onto the Lord Jesus, something happened immediately. When the Lord Jesus tells you to walk away, He doesn't mean make provisions in case of a relapse – He means get up and go now – friends. It's not easy to follow Christ – never has been. Let's just keep this real....

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

~ The man carrying his bed was the proof of a transformed life. The Pharisees despised that - and they wanted to accuse the man of servile work for carrying his bed on the Sabbath after just being healed. That's just how cold and indifferent many church members really are today. Of course, now the man's problem quickly becomes that He obeyed Jesus. He may have been dying before but stoning for breaking the Sabbath would be immediate. They want to know who told him he could take up his bed and walk, who authorized the breaking of the Mosaic System of Levitical Law. The Pharisee's would have killed them both. That's when this man looks around - but Jesus had vanished. I think this is a recorded miracle in Jesus getting away from the crowd that day. The impotent man had no idea Who had really healed him. Now, he had no earthly idea what was even going on....

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.

~ The whole facade of an outward problem the Pharisee's display with Jesus is that He did these things on the Sabbath. Of course, the REAL, underlying reason the Pharisees hated Jesus was because they were jealous and offended. They could not heal. They could not answer Him. They had failed to recruit Jesus by sending Nicodemus. Jesus was making them look like fools. Man was not made for the Sabbath; the Sabbath was made for man. The healing miracle the Lord Jesus did really set murder in their hearts. The Lord Jesus healed this man physically at Bethesda, but his soul was healed in the temple. All of this has been caused by one thing: sin! This healed impotent man got a well body and he got a well soul. He came to know Jesus that day. Picture him waiting for decades until one day the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world comes along in this man's history. We're seeing the impotent man meet the Omnipotent Man! Well, we really need to take a look around at all of the people left on those porches who were not healed. Multitudes of people who think they are saved today are not saved, my friends. Jesus is willing to save them, but they won't look to Jesus. They're waiting and waiting for some sensational something to move somewhere or for an emotion to revive their dead lives - neither of which are ever going to happen....

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

~ When a sheep goes astray, wanders off and falls into a ditch of sin, the Lord Jesus does not rest until that sheep is redeemed. God rested after the creation of the physical universe; but God did not rest after the creation of mankind. He ended up saying He wouldn't strive with them forever. Jesus is getting down in the ditch to save this man, so the Pharisee's want to kill Him more than ever. It was the correct estimation of the Pharisee's that the Lord Jesus Christ made Himself equal to God. So, that brings us to three tremendous claims the Lord Jesus made about Himself; and only with these three statements as a basis of fact can verse twenty-four be made. This verse is used often in presenting the Gospel, but it is critical that all be put together. Unfortunately, it's usually fragmented, which makes it a problem later on for a new convert....

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

~ For those who erroneously insist that the Lord Jesus Christ never claimed to be God, I don't know how God can make it any clearer than this? When you teach that the Bible does not set forth the deity of Christ, you just happen to be completely wrong! I really do not see how these people can make an argument with a straight face. They are absolutely intellectually dishonest. You might disagree with Jesus on an interpretation of some of His commandments, but you have to be woefully ignorant in general to conceive of any other construction being put on these words in verse eighteen. If "making Himself equal with God" isn't deity, then I don't know how else to define deity....

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

~ We see a perfect correspondence between the Father and the Son here. This makes the charge against Jesus by the Pharisee's ridiculous. The Lord

Jesus never contradicts the Father on any matter nor in any way. Likewise, neither does the Father contradict the Son. Because Jesus does what God does, He can forgive sin. I think this passage also illustrates the perfect harmony of the personal and intimate relationship between the Father and the Son....

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

~ As God raised from the dead the Son, also shall He raise the dead. This second great statement tells us Christ imparts life to whom He will. It is on the basis of that that he who heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me shall not perish but have everlasting life. And the third great statement we have here is this following verse. We can have everlasting life if we hear His call to us and believe on Him. Jesus does what God does; Jesus raises the dead and Jesus is going to judge all men some day, friends – let’s be clear. The saved and the lost are all going to appear before Him, albeit under separate circumstances. The believer, of course, will be appearing before Christ to determine whether he receives a reward or not. The lost come before the Great White Throne for condemnation. Only on the basis of all of this can the following statement be made....

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

~ In no unmistakable terms Jesus claims He is God. Our command today, if we love Him, is to obey and trust Him. Doesn't that just seem too simple? That is what saves us. Well, our Spiritual Safari has more to say about all of this, and we will do so in the next leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. I hope you can continue with us ~

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