

Do You Want to Be Healed?

John 5:1-15

By [Rev. Ralph S. Kelley](#)

If you would open your Bibles to the gospel of John, the fifth chapter of the gospel of John. As you're turning there I just want to make you aware of one text issue that we have in our passage this morning. If you have a King James Version you probably have a verse 4, and if you don't have a King James Version you don't have a verse 4. The oldest and most reliable manuscripts do not include verse 4 and it's quite fascinating the way all that plays out. Let me tell you, the focus of this text is on the work of Jesus Christ and that verse isn't going to affect the focus of this passage at all. If I've got you confused and you want to know more about textual criticism, I encourage you to feel free to email any of our seminary interns and ask them what they think. They would gladly help you with that; I feel certain! That being said, let's turn our attention to the Word of God, John's gospel, the fifth chapter, beginning in verse 1. And remember, this is the Word of God. But let me pray before we read that.

Lord, we do pray that You would give us great insight and wisdom as we look at this glorious Gospel of Yours. And we pray this in Christ's name, amen.

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, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids — blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once, the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a

crowd in the place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever.
Amen.

You know, sometimes what we think is our greatest need, our biggest problem, is not really our greatest need or our biggest problem. I remember it very clearly, though it was some fifteen years ago when it took place, but one night, Saturday night, we were living just outside of Georgia and we decided to grill out one night and as I started the little grill with the little propane tank on the side of it and we started to grill out, I had the meat on, and it started to rain. And that had happened before, and we had a nice set up there where there was a back patio but also had a large screened porch area, and I was able to get the grill rolled underneath the screen porch area and I went inside to get some seasonings. And when I came back out, I noticed that the tube that carries the propane from the tank to the grill was on fire and was burning back towards the propane tank. And I thought to myself, "That's not good." (laughter) "I've got to get that out of the screened porch area!" So I went running out to the screened porch and as I was trying to get outside I flung the screen door open and I hit it so hard that I broke the door, and I rolled it out there and it was still on fire. So I knew I kept a hose rolled up right back there so I reached down to grab the hose and as I reached down to grab the hose, there was a large snake sitting on top of the hose.

So here I am looking at the snake, the snake's looking at me; I look over at the grill, it's still burning down towards the propane tank, and I have to make a decision what I'm going to do because I don't do snakes! But I ended up grabbing the snake and throwing him down on the ground, getting the hose, spraying the grill, putting out the fire, ruining dinner, and that was the evening. You know, I thought I had a problem when it started raining a little bit, but it turned out that I had a much bigger problem that I was not aware of. The man who encounters Jesus in our passage this morning, he thinks he understands what his problem is, but the reality of it is, he has a much bigger problem. And we're going to take a look at that this morning.

Verses 1 through 5 kind of set the scene for us. Jesus is in Jerusalem again and He makes the point to go to the pool where all these people with diseases and disabilities, they wait around. They are in hopes that when the waters start to churn a little bit that if they get in it, it might heal them. They're trying to figure out a way to get healed. And Jesus walks right into the middle of this crowd where these people are. And when you think about it, you think about — we're told here that's there's numerous, "a multitude" number of people there, and Jesus walks right into the middle of it. It's a reminder that we live in a broken world, and we

certainly had those reminders this week, didn't we? Be it from the bombing in Boston, the murder of a police officer, a fertilizer explosion plant in Texas, almost leveling an entire community, an earthquake in China — hundreds dead, thousands injured — even closer to home, personal diagnoses from doctors that we don't want to hear. You know, we live in a broken world, but the good news is that Jesus comes and He meets us right in our brokenness. And just as Jesus walked into Bethesda, right in the middle of all the disease, right in the middle of all the disability, He walks into our life.

THE QUESTION

And when He shows up here in verse 6 He comes to a particular man and He knew he has been sick for a long time. And He walks right up to him and He asks him a rather remarkable question. He asks him, “Do you want to be healed?” Now that's really a fascinating question, don't you think? I mean, the man has been, for almost four decades, crippled, and Jesus walks up to him and asks him, “Do you want to be healed?” Jesus asks you that same question this morning. Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be relieved of the biggest burden that you have in your life? Now the man, he doesn't say, “Yes.” You notice in verse 7 what he starts to say. He says, “I have no one to put me in the pool. The water gets stirred up and other people beat me in there.” You see, he's trying to figure out how to heal himself and he can't figure it out and he is lost even as he's talking to Jesus. He's trying to figure out if there is some sort of mystical way to fix his problems or if there's some way to save himself, to make himself better. But you know, Jesus has a remarkable way of showing up in these gospel accounts where sometimes just His presence itself exclaims, “I am your only hope.” And the fact that Jesus was standing there in front of that man should have told that man that he wasn't going to get this problem solved by himself.

THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST

And in verse 8, it's almost as if Jesus doesn't wait for the man to finish giving his excuses. Jesus just says to him, “Get up! Take up your bed and walk.” That's the power of Jesus; it's that He can tell a man who's been laying for thirty-eight years, “Get up! Take up your bed and walk.” But it's so much more powerful, isn't it? You think of how, with His spoken word, the universe came into existence. It is Christ who is able to bring forth life from a virgin. It is Christ who can defeat death and walk out of a grave. That's the power of Jesus Christ. And the same Christ stands in front of this man and He's able to bring forth life — muscles and bones and joints that have not worked for thirty-eight years — and says, “Get up and walk.” And all of these things point to the power that Jesus has to bring our dead hearts alive. For without Jesus, our hearts would be no more able to come alive than this man would be able to walk. You see, we are the invalid. We are the

blind. We are the paralyzed. We are hopeless without the power of Jesus. And when Jesus heals, He heals completely and instantly and it is all done, as we see in the first part of verse 9.

THE OPPOSITION

And then, John kind of sends out almost this yield sign in the second half of verse 9 there. He says, "Now that day was the Sabbath." And as we read that, we think to ourselves, "Uh-oh. I've read these type of things before. We're about to get into a big discussion maybe about what you can and can't do on the Sabbath." And the second half of chapter 5 here really deals a lot more with that than what happens in this account that we're reading, but it's one of those things that makes us think for a second, "Are we about to venture away from Jesus doing this great work, doing this great healing, and this man is up and moving?" But we're going to get to stay there and we're going to get to see what Christ has in store for him.

Pick up again with me in verse 10. "So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, 'It is the Sabbath and it's not lawful for you to take up your bed.' But he answered them, 'The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" They asked him, 'Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place." There's two things that I want you to see in these verses 10 through 13 and the first thing is that wherever Jesus is at work, you can expect there to be opposition. Wherever Jesus is growing His kingdom, is growing His people, is expanding His rule, Satan is always going to be there fighting Him every bit of the way. So we should never be surprised that, as we're growing in Christ, that we're met with opposition. We shouldn't be surprised that as we seek as a congregation to take the Gospel throughout the world that we might face opposition because we're going to. It always happens.

THE REACTION

The second thing I want you to see in this section is, look at the reaction of the Jewish people. Here comes this guy who has been crippled for almost four decades now, he comes walking through town or through the temple, and he's carrying his bed and their first word to him is not, "Wow, look at you! You're walking! I've never seen you walk before! This is fantastic!" No, the first word to him is, "Why are you carrying your bed? It's the Sabbath; you're not supposed to do that." I'll just save you all time; if you went home and read all the Old Testament this afternoon, nowhere in the Old Testament does it say, "Do not carry your bed on the Sabbath." That's their made up rule to try and earn God's favor. And so I look at that and I think, "Those people! How can they be that

way?" And then I think, "I wonder if I'm one of those people?" I wonder if you're one of those people.

I am gifted administratively; I'm an administrator. And I have to fight sometimes taking too much of a look at process and not enough look at people. I've been here on Sunday mornings making sure everything is setup just the way it's supposed to be set up and I can walk right past people. And I have to remind myself, "No, no. I'm a minister of the Gospel to these people. These are just other things." And I think it's very possible for some of you all to come here week after week and to try to sit in about the same spot where you normally sit and then you start to figure out if the service is good or not. Did the preacher go too longer? Was the lighting okay? Was the air conditioning okay? I know that's never okay; I hear that every week. (laughter) And then, that's how we try to decide how things went and we never take time to wonder about the person who's sitting in the pew in front of us or behind us or down the row from us, wondering if they need ministering to, wondering if they need encouragement, wondering if they need love. You see, we're not just the invalids, the blind and the paralyzed people. Far too often, we're also the Jewish people that are judging others unfairly.

THE REAL PROBLEM

As we move on in our text, as we look at verse 14, we read, "Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well. Sin no more that nothing worse may happen to you.'" Now scholars are divided here of what Jesus is really saying. Is Jesus saying to the man that he was crippled for the last thirty-eight years because he had a specific sin in his life? And a lot of scholars who I respect say, "Yes" and a lot say, "No." So when you come to a text like this you do a lot of reading and a lot of praying trying to figure out where you're going to make your stand. And then you say, "If I'm going to be standing behind this pulpit, I'm going to go with what Derek Thomas says." And Derek Thomas says he doesn't read it that way, that Jesus isn't saying that it was because of a particular sin that that man had been that way. He thinks there was a whole lot more there. You see, Jesus, He had already healed the man physically, but He wasn't done with him. He came searching after him again. And Jesus seeks out the man in the temple and tells him the real issue in his healing.

After Jesus found him in the temple and He said to him, "See, you are well. Sin no more that nothing worse may happen to you," alright, so what's the issue? What's He trying to say? He's saying here that the issue is the man's holiness, not his health. "I've healed you," Jesus was telling him, "for the purpose of making you holy." Jesus was not content just to heal the man's legs; He wanted to heal his heart. And Jesus is not content just to take away your biggest fears and troubles in this world right now. He wants to heal your heart. Do you see this? He says, "Sin no more. Stop sinning. My aim in healing your body is the healing of your soul." And yes, He warns him; He warns him that he shouldn't

take his healing lightly. He shouldn't make a mockery of it, because if he does there's something a whole lot worse than being paralyzed for thirty-eight years that's awaiting him, and that's the judgment of God. "I've healed you that you may be holy, that you may stop doing evil." God has called us into His kingdom that we may be holy, that we may stop doing evil. Jesus says, "Don't turn from Me to a life of sin."

You know, the man woke up that morning thinking his biggest problem was that he was crippled, but Jesus tells him, "You have a bigger problem than the circumstances in your life." This is what Derek Thomas says about this. He says, "What we're meant to learn is that the evidence that this man has truly come to know who Jesus is and loves Him with all his heart, will be that he will not go on sinning anymore." Not that he's going to be sinless, but that his desire would be that he would be free from sin. Is that your biggest desire in your life is that you would be free from sin? You know, that's really the issue, isn't it? Of all the things you long for most in this world is that you would be holy, that you would be righteous, that you would be free from sin. Do you have a desire with all your heart to quit sinning or do you secretly, within your heart, have a fear to let go of the things of this world? Do you love them more than you love Jesus? Jesus is saying to us, "Above all else, you should desire to be like Me." So the question comes to us this morning, "Do you want to be healed? Do you want your brokenness to be healed? Do you want your fears, your weakness, and your heart healed?" If you do, then repent of your sins and trust the One who came to heal you completely, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together.

Father God, I thank You for this brief time that we've had to look in Your Word. Your Word is powerful, Your Spirit is powerful. Lord, I pray that Your Spirit would work this Word deep into our hearts and minds in the coming days and weeks and that we would be people who would cry out, "We want to be healed!" We pray this in Christ's name, amen.

Our hymn of response this morning is hymn number 441, "Jesus Shall Reign."

I would encourage you to come up and meet our new members. Now receive the benediction. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each of you both now and forevermore. Amen.

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