

John 5 1-9

Our passage for this morning in John 5:1-9

We might be surprised to find ourselves in this story. Listen to see where you are found.

After these things 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 porticoes. ³ In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; ⁴ for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.] ⁵ A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He *said to him, "Do you wish to get 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, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk."* ⁹ Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk.*

The setting.

Another Jewish feast is taking place where Jews are gathering into Jerusalem. Jesus went and made it a point to go by the sheep gate where there was a pool called Bethesda. That is a Hebrew or Aramaic term meaning house of mercy. The pool had some kind of porch structure that gave it the sense that it was a house. The pool remained calm except at times when the water will stir. Tradition or superstition says that an angel stirs the water and the first person into the pool will be healed of their disease. For that reason, a large crowd was gathered in this pool including one man who was an invalid of some kind. His disease is not known. He is alone. No one is there to help him into the pool when the waters are stirred. Though he has doubts that he can be the first into the pool, still he comes in hopes that maybe this will be the day. He's had this disease or this disability for 38 years.

The encounter

The encounter begins with verse 6. It is in this encounter where you may find yourself.

As humans, each of us becomes burdened with things that weigh on us and adversely affect us. It may be physical disability. It may be a chronic condition. The burden may come in the form of emotional. It may come in the form of a spiritual which is often times connected with the emotional. This man is crippled in some way physically. This man is crippled emotionally. He is alone. No one brought him there. No one will help him into the pool. Loneliness happens even when we are in a crowd as happened here. The man is crippled spiritually. Jesus deals with that after the physical healing. In these verses, notice three aspects of Jesus' encounter with the man, and what these tell us about Jesus.

He knew.

Verse 6 literally reads, “Seeing him lying there, and knowing he had been there a long time, Jesus said to him...”

Jesus knew the man’s condition. Jesus knew that for 38 years, he was affected by the problem. Jesus knew he had been there for a long time. He knew the physical, the emotional (loneliness), and the spiritual (the sin effect).

He knows you also. He knows what you know about yourself and that which no one else knows. He knows what others know about you that you don’t know. He knows what you and others do know. Even further, He knows what you don’t know about yourself. He knows what others don’t know about you. So, the reality is, what you think you are hiding this morning is full knowledge to God. Yes, that includes Jesus. For Him to know all these things demonstrate that He is all-knowing, an attribute given only to God.

Psalm 139

O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.

²You know ^[a]when I sit down and ^[b]when I rise up;
You understand my thought from afar.

³You ^[c]scrutinize my ^[d]path and my lying down,
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

⁴Even before there is a word on my tongue,
Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

⁵You have enclosed me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.

⁶*Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is *too* high, I cannot attain to it.

He felt compassion.

In Verse 6, after seeing and knowing the man in his condition and that he had been there a long time, Jesus said, “Do you wish to be well?” Notice the response. He never said yes. All he said was if my healing is conditioned on getting to the pool, then I probably won’t be well. He never gave Jesus a direct answer. There was no faith in the answer as far as we see in the text. So, Jesus does not act on the man’s faith. Jesus acts on His own compassion.

Jesus shows that He is God through giving sovereign grace. It is nothing the man earned or deserved. After all, if he did, it would not be grace.

Throughout the NT, we find passages that say that Jesus was moved with compassion. It is a feeling of mercy and pity that moved him to action. In each of the cases, the feeling of mercy and pity was followed by actions of healing.

It is the same way He moves towards us, especially when we are found in a similar situation as the man in this story, brokenhearted, lonely, and no sense of hope.

Shortly after Mike Anderson and his wife became Christ- followers, the IRS asked Mike to defend a tax return from years earlier. Unfortunately, he couldn’t defend it. He hadn’t been honest. So began months of painful meetings with the IRS.

The day came for the last meeting. After parking, Mike discovered the meter wouldn't take his few remaining pennies, and he was already late. He nearly cried. Instead he prayed, "Lord, we're trusting you with a huge tax problem. It's dumb not to ask you for help with this little meter." When he came out later, he saw what looked like a ticket on the car window. He was stunned! "Hadn't I asked God to help me?" He yanked the paper from under the wiper blade and read these words: "Mike, your time was expired. I took care of it. Chuck." Incredibly, a friend "happened" to recognize his car and "happened" to notice the expired meter. Happened? No. God had used this friend to speak to him that day with a promise of forgiveness and healing, just as he spoke in the months following by resolving their tax debt.

He demonstrated power.

Did Jesus touch him? No. Did Jesus anoint Him? No. Jesus gave three commands. "Get up. Take up your pallet. Walk."

Jesus demonstrates that He is God through His all power. As He spoke in creation from nothing, so He spoke this man from sick to whole. The Bible says that the man was immediately healed. I wonder what the difference was in feeling. A burden lifted like a huge boulder on his shoulders. The man got up. He took up his pallet. He walked.

This is our Jesus. As you enter into and grow in that relationship with Him. He shows His power in transforming ways so that He receives the glory due to His name.

Power is demonstrated in healing of the illness. Power is later demonstrated. For Jesus sought the man out. Verse 14 tells us Jesus found in him in the temple and said to him, "Behold you have become well; do not sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to you."

It's bad to have an illness. It's bad to have disabilities. Far worse are the consequences that are due to our sinful life. Jesus offers healing and forgiveness of sin, and a new life of power over sin.

Staff is a friend of one of Joyce's brothers. High school was rough for him. He wasn't the popular kid in class. He had a job at Burger King. He was kind of looked down on because of that. Staff got the last laugh on that. He is now owner of several franchises of Burger King. Not long ago, Rick started getting texts from Staff that were actual devotions. Rick sent me a couple of them. They were pointed and right on target. It was obvious that something happened to Staff. It did. Staff told Rick that he was just driving. All of a sudden, he sensed this heavy presence of God around him. The conviction came on him. He gave His life to Christ. Rick asked him questions just to be sure. It's real. God knew Staff. He encountered Staff, invaded with His compassion, mercy, and grace. Staff experienced the greatest power of God, the power to completely transform a life. That's my God. He takes the initiative.

Titus 3:4-5 - ⁴ But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

Someone here needs forgiveness and a clean start of life.

Some here needs to talk to Jesus. Talk to Him. Tell Him about your feelings, your worries, you problems. Ask Him to help you through them. He already knows. He is ready to show you His mercy, His compassion, and His power.