

Paralytic Healed

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Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

- [0 : 0 0] John chapter 5, and I'm going to be reading verses 1 to 17. Flung a couple in there at the end, Stephen, my apologies.
- John chapter 5, 1 to 17. 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, paralyzed.
- One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 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, Sir, I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up. While I'm going, another steps down before me. Jesus said to him, Get up.
- [1 : 1 4] 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. It's not lawful for you to take up your bed. But he answered him, The man who healed me, that man said to me, Take up your bed and walk.
- And 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 For Jesus had withdrawn as there was a crowd in the place.
- Afterwards 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.
- And this is why the Jews were persecuting Jesus. Because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered him, My father is working until now.
- [2 : 2 2] And I am working. Well, this is the word of the Lord. I pray that you would bless it. Can you imagine meeting Jesus?
- Actually meeting Jesus? Last week we were at the end of John chapter 4. Just before this. And there is quite a striking difference between these two healings.
- Last week the official from Capernaum travelled miles to seek Jesus. Yet when he found him, Jesus had a reluctance to go with him. And challenge the man's faith.
- This week, however, Jesus is the one who travels and seeks out this man. And the most striking detail is that he heals him without any faith on the part of the man.
- And without the man even knowing who it was that healed him. It's a very striking difference between the two signs. One straight after the other. One with the man being the seeker.
- [3 : 2 8] The man having to have faith. And the other with Jesus as the seeker. And healing the man without any faith or recognition on the man's part. Can you imagine?

I mean, if you're a Christian, do you ever feel that longing to see Jesus? And I'm not saying that life never has distractions. Or that we should only ever go about thinking about Jesus.

Like nothing else exists or even matters. But at the heart of what it is to be a Christian. Is to behold Jesus. Paul says, I count everything as loss.

Because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus. Of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. And Peter says, Though you have not seen him. You love him.

Though you do not now see him. You believe in him. And rejoice with joy that is inexpressible. And filled with glory. Obtaining the outcome of your faith. The salvation of your souls.

[4 : 32] Don't you ever feel that? That gravity towards him in your soul. That deep longing to see Jesus. To be with him. If only we could be before him. To be with him.

To see him. To behold him. Or when your prayer simply becomes like that of Moses. Show me your glory. I want to see you. What would it have been like?

To walk with Jesus like the disciples did. Or to witness these things like John did. Can you imagine? Can you imagine? And this man.

This man was given a surprise visit. From the king of heaven. And he didn't even know him from Adam. He didn't know it was Jesus. But Isaiah 53.2 tells us.

That this would be the case of the suffering servant. He grew up before him. He grew up before him like a tender shoot. Like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty. Or majesty to attract us to him.

[5 : 33] Nothing in his appearance. That we should desire him. Just a man like everyone else. This man did not know who was standing before him.

Not a clue. Yet Jesus sought him out. Jesus healed him. And goes on his way. Without even revealing who he is. When we think of what it would be like.

What Jesus was like. One thing is for sure. He was like a man. Like every other Jewish man in his day. He was every bit as human as me and you.

His interaction with this person. And the Jewish authorities showed that. Because when they discussed it. They said. The man. The man who healed me. The man said this and that.

And they asked. Well who is the man? Jesus was just another man in Jerusalem that day. But what he did. Separated him from every other man.

[6 : 33] In history. And. Perhaps if we think. If we were to go back in time. Maybe Christians today. Would be surprised at just how human Jesus is.

And we rightly. Have a high view of Jesus. It's right that we have a high view of Jesus. You can never have. Too high a view of Jesus. But often there's a reaction.

Against liberalism. There's a historical tendency. For that to be at the expense. Of his humanity. We end up trading away. Something of his true humanity.

In the fight to maintain his divinity. Now I'm not saying this is a sign to prove that Jesus is human. But imagine this. Imagine the son of God.

Imagine. God the son. Standing before you. And you don't even know it. God. And I don't think he was playing hide and seek in his humanity.

[7 : 28] Hiding behind flesh. And somehow concealed. In fact. I think this sign is more of a challenge. Of what you do when he is revealed. Than about him being concealed.

See this sign is not about what you do when you don't know it's Jesus. But rather what you do when you find out that it was Jesus. See doesn't. Jesus doesn't roll into town.

In a parade. A song and dance. And then once everybody's paying attention. Then he does his miracle. That's not what he's like. No. What we see is that he is at work.

Long before anyone realizes it. Jesus is at work. Long before anyone realizes it. He's doing things before anyone knows it. And before anyone realizes it's him that's doing it.

And you can see that. Just look at the confusion over this. Suddenly after 38 years. This man is finally healed. But not by the famous pool.

[8 : 28] Rather. By an unknown man. Healed after 38 years by an unknown man. And this healed man doesn't know who did it.

The Jewish authorities don't know who did it. And whatever the case. It's on a day when work should not have been done. Yet look at how this ends. Verse 17.

My father is working until now. And I am working. Tomorrow I'm going to be off for two weeks. This is technically my last task before going off.

And there's been some stuff that have happened. In the past few days. That have made it a little bit hard. But I'm reminded. I'm reminded. By this.

That if anyone knows what it is to work. It's Jesus. Here. Here is Jesus. Working when no one knows it. Few people see it.

[9 : 25] No one realizes it. And above all. No one was supposed to be working on that day anyway. But Jesus is working. Jesus is always working. Just as his father is.

You see. I feel like I need to let people know. When my work has been hard. To garner some sympathy. To feel good about my work.

To get acknowledged by someone. To get a pat on the back. Not Jesus. No he's not like that. He does his work. On the national day off. He does a work that's miraculous.

Yet he doesn't do it for a crowd. He doesn't do it for his own fame. He doesn't even leave a business card. He doesn't tell the guy his name. He doesn't do it for acknowledgement. And at the end of this.

When he says that his father is working. And so is he. The thing that really infuriates the authorities. Is him making himself equal with God. Yet it was them.

[10 : 27] They forced the issue. He did the miracle without even leaving his name. He wasn't about his own fame then. They forced the issue. You see.

I think that is the kind of. Humble servant. That Paul talks about. When he says in Philippians. Though he was in the form of God. He did not count equality with God.

A thing to be grasped. He emptied himself. Taking the form of a servant. Being born in the likeness of men. Being found in human form.

He humbled himself. By becoming obedient to the point of death. Even death on a cross. Doesn't that describe this? The person who's doing this miracle. Jesus didn't roll into town like a God.

He is God. But he didn't roll into town like that. He came in like a humble servant. A humble and unknown servant. Who isn't concerned with his own fame or glory.

[11 : 26] But the service that he's given to others. He does this work without anyone knowing. And goes on his way. This is our God. We really shouldn't be intimidated by anyone's false opinion.

About what they think God is like. Some people think God is judgmental. Unfair. Egotistic. Or whatever the charge. This man encountered God. Without even knowing it.

And I think back to John's prologue. When John said. We beheld his glory. Glory as of the only son from the father. Full of grace and truth.

See the man at the pool. Encountered the son of God. The only son from the father. But he didn't realize it. Didn't realize who he was. When he was asked.

The man didn't know his name. But I've no doubt. If he was asked to describe the man. He would have said. Well the man. Whoever he was. He was full of grace and truth.

[12 : 23] You can see that. By the way. That the man. This man. Always emphasized. The healing. When he was questioned. He emphasized. The fact that he was healed. Whereas.

The authorities. Always emphasized. The Sabbath breaking. You can see. What their interest is. Now. A few years ago. I must admit. I preached this passage. And I think.

I did this chap. A disservice. And it's difficult. Some commentators. Reckon that this man. Betrayed the healer. By telling the authorities. Where others. Just reckon.

That he was given a report. And that it was not. Meant that way. And I previously. Thought that this man. Threw Jesus under the bus. But now. I'm not so sure. I don't think.

I don't think. He was throwing him. Under the bus. Actually. I don't even think. That's the point. But we'll get to the point. In a little while. Now this man. The man in this story.

[13 : 19] He's been disabled. For 38 years. And he's apparently. Been at this pool. For a long time. This pool. Maybe. Is like lords. You know about lords.

People go there. For the water. To be healed. A place where the sick. Go to get healed. By the water. But this pool. You need to wait. On a random.

Unpredictable. Event. And then it's a one shot deal. First in the water. First in the water. When it stirs. Gets healed. This man's been disabled. 38 years. He's at this pool.

What does that tell you? What does it tell you? That he's sitting at this pool. After 38 years. When nothing else works for you. You begin to be tempted.

By superstition. Is that not the case? Doesn't matter. How weird it might be. If it offers a chance. If it offers. The smallest glimmer of hope. You're going to give it a shot.

[14 : 15] 38 years. I'm sure he's tried everything else. Now he's sitting at this pool. He's pinning all of his hopes. On a superstition. His hopes are hanging on a dream.

Here. Yet his reality is an absolute nightmare. And as much as he's looking to this superstition. He can't even find out for himself. Because he's always pipped at the post.

He can never get there in time. He's become invisible. Forgotten. Even his hopes in this superstition are dashed. Simply because no one cares enough.

To help him into the pool. He might be forgotten by everyone else. He might be overlooked. He might be unwanted. Unloved. Unvalued. Isolated. Outcast. Forsaken by everyone else.

But not Jesus. Not God. That's not what God is like. Jesus makes a beeline straight for him. Of all the people to interact with on Sabbath.

[15 : 15] In Jerusalem. Of all the people. Jesus chooses this man. Do you want to be healed? And the man's answer reveals that he just doesn't have a clue who Jesus is.

He's still talking about the pool. If he knew who Jesus was, like the official. But he doesn't. He doesn't have a clue who this is. He's still talking about the pool. Even if he did get in the pool first.

He's never going to walk out of there. Never. He's been like that for 38 years. Jesus. What is a jacuzzi going to do for him now? It's superstition this thing about the pool.

But in comes Jesus. The man from Nazareth. He doesn't help him in the pool. He doesn't do that. He doesn't give him physio. He doesn't pray for him. He just commands him.

To get up and walk. This is absolutely astounding. In less than 10 seconds. Jesus undoes 38 years of disability.

- [16 : 17] In less than 10 seconds. In a few words. He undoes a lifetime of disability. And then he moves on. Before the guy catches his name.
- Remember the man didn't seek Jesus. The man didn't ask Jesus for anything. The man didn't even know it was Jesus. And the man is healed. And I'm sure he praises God for the healing.
- Because later on he's found at the temple. But he's not a Jesus follower. He didn't even know that was Jesus. He doesn't even know Jesus' name. And this got me thinking.
- Of whether we at times think that. Perhaps God only blesses. Christians. Or helps Christians. I mean it's certainly true.
- That salvation is in no other than Jesus. But cannot God bless and heal anyone he likes? Is God not a merciful and gracious God?
- [17 : 16] Are not all humans created by God? Can he not have pity on any human he created? See the way Jesus does this. Reminds me.
- That we just. We simply cannot put God in a box. We cannot presume upon the grace of God. This is. Thomas and folks are preaching through Jonah just now.
- And we're finding this. You just. You can't presume. On God's grace and mercy. You can't put him in a box. God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.
- People often think that God needs to be appeased. But he's more forgiven and merciful than humans are. More often than not we need to appease each other. Meanwhile God lavishes grace.
- And abounds in steadfast love and mercy. But here. Of all the days. All the days that Jesus could have done this. Why this day?
- [18 : 17] Why the Sabbath? The man's been in this condition for 38 years. And he's been at this pool for a long time. One more day wouldn't have mattered. Why did Jesus do it on this day?
- On the Sabbath? It's about 13,870 odd days this man's been like this. Why not one more day? Why the Sabbath? Well I think.
- Perhaps he was challenging. The Jewish leaders to see if they actually cared about the things. That God cares about. How many times throughout the prophets. Has God told Israel to stop their songs.
- Stop their sacrifices. When they care little about mercy and justice. Stop your worship. When you're hating your neighbour. That's not loving God. What if.
- What if Jesus asked. The religious leaders. The question he asked this man. Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be made well? Do you want to sin no more?
- [19 : 17] What would they have said? Suddenly this man. This man is caught between Jesus. And the Jews. And he stopped.
- The authorities stop him for breaking the Sabbath. The no work law. Now clearly. What we must get clearly. Jesus did not make this man sin.
- Whatever this man is doing. It's not a sin. He's just doing something. The authorities don't like. He finds himself in trouble. Because of something that Jesus told him to do.
- The charge that is against him. Is man made. Is extra burdens. On to the law. The Sabbath wasn't made for. Man wasn't made for Sabbath. Sabbath was made for man.
- So this man. This man's found himself in trouble. Because. He did what Jesus asked him to do. And we'll find that.
- [20 : 14] Won't we? Probably most of you found that already. We end up. Landing ourself in trouble somewhere. Not because Jesus is a troublemaker.

It's actually because. Jesus frees us. From the rules and burdens. Of the kingdom of darkness. And they don't like it. So we get in bother. Now I want to say one brief thing.

About the second interaction. With Jesus. And then we'll finish with. What I think the point is. Jesus found this man again. At the temple. A second time. He's not at the pool anymore.

He's at the temple. He's likely giving thanks to God. For his healing. Boy. Is this not where we want to be found. When Jesus turns up. We want to be found.

Among God's people. Giving thanks to the Lord. I don't know. If the man would have recognized Jesus. But Jesus recognizes him first. And engages him again.

[21 : 10] He mentions the man's physical state. See you've been made well. And he tells him not to sin. And hints at his spiritual state. Now we don't know what the sin is.

We can guess. But we don't know. Some think. Some think. That the man. Did sin. By going to the leaders after this. And telling him Jesus name. Other commentators.

Think it might be. A sin that caused. The paralysis. In the first place. We just don't know. But what is clear. Is that Jesus. Is telling the man.

That sin does more damage. Than 38 years of disability. Sin will do worse. Watch out for sin. Sin no more.

Jesus has given the man. A more accurate picture. Of the reality. And danger of sin. But this is the thing. See Jesus didn't come to the pool. To judge this man.

[22 : 05] He didn't come to the pool. To judge him. He came to help him. When no one else would help him. And Jesus didn't come. To judge the world. He came seeking the lost.

He came to help us. In our sorry state. He came to cure. Our incurable disease. He came to set us free. But he came with a question. Do you even want to be made well?

So finally. What I think the point of this passage. In this sign is. It's the third sign. And remember. The one just before it. The man came seeking Jesus. Jesus criticized the Jews.

For seeking signs. Always demanding signs. Before they would believe. Up to this point. Jesus has. And will continue throughout John. To criticize the Jews. For demanding signs.

Before they believe. What are you going to do for us. So that we can see and believe. I won't believe it. Until I see it. And Jesus criticizes this. And we saw that.

[23 : 06] In the sign. Just before this. But this man. In sign number three. This man did not seek a sign. He didn't even seek Jesus. He didn't demand. Or seek.

Or ask anything. Jesus just came. And gave to him. But I don't think. That this is really about this man. You see. The passage starts with. A feast of who?

After this. There was a feast of the Jews. And the passage ends with who? The Jews. Were persecuting Jesus. This is why the Jews.

Were seeking all the more. To kill him. Verse 18. And the reason. That I've changed my mind. On this man himself. And I no longer think. That he betrayed Jesus.

Is because. I don't think. It's really about the man. And even when it is. About the man. The man is constantly. Emphasizing the healing. Whereas these Jewish. Religious leaders.

[24 : 03] They're constantly. Emphasizing the. The Sabbath breaking. That's all. They're interested in. Sabbath breaking. Now you might.

Forgive them. You might. Forgive them. For being a little. Over religious. A little strict. And zealous. When it comes to this man. But when the man. Comes back.

And tells them. Who the other man is. Jesus. They have no excuse. You see. You might. Forgive them. About thinking. About a man. Carrying his bed. Saying.

Oh. That's breaking. The Sabbath. But what they do. With a man. Who heals. Another man. They've got no excuse. No excuse. Suddenly.

It's not. About a man. Carrying a bed. When they have. The same. Attitude. About a man. Healing. Another man. From a.

[24 : 56] 38 year. Disability. And they have. The same attitude. Then you know. There's something. There's something. Seriously wrong. Sin no more. That nothing worse.

May happen to you. You see. It's not the man. Sinning. By telling. Telling on Jesus. It's these religious leaders. Sinning. By persecuting.

The Christ. Who does such things. Remember. Jesus. Has criticized them. From. For demanding. Signs. Before they believe. But this. This exposes.

Their hard hearts. Because. When they are. Given a sign. Do they believe. No. They don't believe. This is what they do.

When they are. Given a sign. Who can heal a man. Like that. Except God. And when they're. Showing that. They don't. Believe. They persecute.

[25 : 50] The man. They persecute. The one. Who did the sign. Signs. Not about. What you do. When you don't know. What's Jesus. Rather. What you do. When you find out. That it is. Jesus. Who did it. Imagine. Persecuting. The Christ. The one. Who can. Cure. The sick. See.

John. Has written. These signs. For us. To see. That it was. Jesus. Who did them. What do we do. With Jesus. In this passage. You have.

The spiritual. Leaders. Of Israel. Having a big. Problem. About how. God works. Or even. That God. Is working. On the Sabbath. Even.

Although. They are. It's. Unbelievable. But here's. The thing. We can. Either. Respond. To the work. Of God. Like. The Jewish. Leaders. Or.

[26 : 41] We can. Respond. To the work. Of God. Like. This man. Who went. To the temple. And when. Asked. He told. Them. Plainly. That it was. Jesus. Who made. Him. Well.

Wouldn't. That be. A good. Way. To start. Evangelism. By the way. It's. Jesus. Jesus. Who made. Me. Well. Rather. Than. Persecuting.

The Christ. Who makes. People. Well. If. You. Have. Been. Made. Well. By. Jesus. Then. Just. Now. We're. Going. To. Sing. Praise. To. His. Name. And. Give. Thanks.

And. If. You've. Not. Yet. Experienced. That. Then. Now. Is. The. Time. To. Put. Your. In. Jesus. And. See. What. It. Is. To. Be. Made. Well. In. Christ.