

PM John 5:1-18 Jesus' 3rd Sign: Healing at Bethsaida

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Date: 20 February 2022

Preacher: Mr Allan Thomson

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[2 : 13] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. We're going to do that in our opening psalm, Psalm 95 from the Scottish Psalter, which you'll find on page 357.

O come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone, a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation.

[3 : 27] Let us, before his presence come, with praise and thankful voice, let us sing psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise.

We're going to sing verses 1 down to 5 of this psalm, standing to sing to God's praise, Psalm 95.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 13] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Father, we come to you to acknowledge that you are the one who has made us. You are our creator.

[7 : 10] And in him and in you we live and move and have our being. It's only because you allow us to live that we are alive and we come into your presence this evening.

We come at this time at this time of the evening of your day to worship you again, to remember how great you are and to wonder at your works.

Father, we remember that you are the God of creation, the one who has made us, but you are the God of salvation and redemption.

Father, we thank you for your ways with your people in the Old Testament, the people of Israel, and how you brought them out of their bondage in Egypt.

A picture of our bondage to sin in which we are all born. And Father, we thank you for your people in the Old Testament. And Father, we thank you for your people as you brought them out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage and out of the house of sin with a great and a mighty hand.

[8 : 20] And you provided for your people as you brought them out of Egypt. As you took them to the promised land. And Father, so we thank you that you are not only the one who has made us, and for those of us who are Christians here this evening, who has redeemed us, but you're the one who keeps us.

We thank you that you are the God who has begun a good work in us. And you're the God who has promised to continue it right to the end until you take us into your presence in heaven.

Father, we are reminded in your word that we are sinners and that we deserve the penalty of our sin because you're a holy God.

But Father, we thank you that for many of us you have saved us and that your Son, the Lord Jesus, at the cross of Calvary, saved us from your wrath.

He took the punishment that was due to us so that we could be free. Free to worship you, free to have eternal life.

[9 : 39] Father, we thank you that for many of us here this evening we've experienced your grace and your mercy, which is totally undeserved and unmerited. And we stand in your presence this evening, forgiven sinners.

But Father, we are not unmindful of those who have never put their faith and trust in you, who are still in opposition to you, who are still afar off from you.

And so, Father, we pray that here in this hall this evening and throughout the length and breadth of this country where the good news of the gospel is proclaimed as Jesus Christ being a saviour of sinners, that people will come and find salvation and freedom from their sins.

Father, we pray that here in this hall this evening, a nation that, by and large, full of sinful people like ourselves, but has turned its back upon you, has turned its back upon your word, has said in its ethos and its morality that they will not have your Son to reign over them.

And Father, we pray as we're encouraged to do for the governments of this land. We pray for the Scottish government. We pray for the UK government. And we pray that the laws that are passed might be laws that you approve of.

[11 : 21] And Father, that we might be a people, even a nation, that returns to you and returns to your word.

Father, we're conscious as we are in your presence that we need to hear you speak to us. We need to have your power in our lives.

And so we pray that as we come together to worship you and praise you and hear your word this evening, that you would still our hearts and that you might speak into them and that we might be the better people for that, as we hear and as we are obedient to your word.

So be with us, Father. Go with us this evening. Help us to praise you and to worship you aright. And we pray that our worship and our praise might be acceptable to you.

We thank you that we do it in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus, because it's only in his merit, it's only in what he has done for us, that we are able to even come into your presence.

[12 : 35] And so we give you thanks for him. And we thank you for his life and his death that has freed us, many of us, from our sins.

So quieten our hearts and speak to us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Now we're going to sing again to God's praise in Psalm 40.

And we're going to sing verses 1 to 5 of Psalm 40 in the Scottish Psalter, page 259. 259.

The psalmist says, I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay. And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way. He put a new song in my mouth, our God to magnify.

[13 : 45] Many shall see it and shall fear. And on the Lord rely. The psalmist says, O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies, respecting not the proud nor such as turn aside to lies.

O Lord my God, full many are the wonders thou hast done. Thy gracious thoughts to usward far above all thoughts. Are gone.

These five verses to God's praise. And we'll stand if we're able to sing this psalm. Psalm 40. ■■■ryane, the■■■ Scripture

... .. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[16 : 14] Amen. Amen.

You can tell that I'm an accountant and not very good with numbers this evening, whether it's five and six or six and five. My apologies. Anyway, it's good to sing Psalms to God.

Now, can I ask you and invite you, if you have your Bibles, to turn to John's Gospel. John's Gospel in chapter five. John's Gospel in chapter five. And we're going to read the first 18 verses of John's

fifth chapter.

What I want us to do this evening is to look at one of the signs of John's Gospel. We see that there are a number of signs, miracles that the Lord Jesus performed.

I think when I was with you before, before we were doing the series on the Ten Commandments, we looked at perhaps the first two signs of John's Gospel. But I want us to look at this third sign that John gives us in this chapter five.

[18:03] So chapter five and reading from verse one. And after this, there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate in 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 38 years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there for 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.

[19:22] So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, It's 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 that 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. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

But Jesus answered them, My father is working until now, and I am working. This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him.

[20:36] Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling his own father, calling God his own father, making himself equal with God.

And then just two other verses over in John chapter 20, please. John chapter 20 and verse 30.

John chapter 20 and verse 30. John tells us at the end of his gospel, or very near the end of the gospel, in chapter 20, the reason why he has written his gospel.

And so he tells us here, in chapter 20 and verse 30, the purpose of his book. He says these words, Amen.

And may God give us good understanding of his written word. Now before we come to look at that, let's take our hymn books again, and sing from Psalm 119.

Psalm 119, verses 33 to 40. In the Scottish Psalter, and that's on page 402. Psalm 119.

[22:16] Verses 33 through to 40. See these words, Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way. Of thy precepts divine. And to observe it to the end.

I shall my heart incline. Give understanding unto me. So keep thy law, shall I. Yea, even my whole heart I shall observe it carefully.

We're going to sing verses 33 down to 40. And if you're able, we'll stand to sing to God's praise.

Psalm 119. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[24:21] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Because all of them are like signposts to us.

They are not just acts of power or demonstration of Christ's ability to do wonder working events that people are to wonder at.

No, John writes his signs down for us because he has a very specific purpose and significance in telling us of these signs.

[26 : 23] That's why we read in John chapter 20. Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book.

But these specific miracles have been written. These things have been written. In order that, he says, so that for the purpose of that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name.

You see, each of the signs point us to who Jesus Christ is and why he has come.

He's the Christ, God's God's God's God's God's God's God's God's only begotten Son. And it's through him and in him that we should believe.

Now here in John chapter 5, John records this amazing healing of this man by the pool of Bethesda.

[27 : 44] But in so doing, Jesus, the Lord Jesus runs up against a group of people who took exception to the healing. Who took exception to the Lord Jesus himself.

In fact, this miracle triggers the hostility of the Jewish leaders. A hostility that will continue right through to the end of Jesus Christ's life.

This group of Jewish leaders, as we shall see, accuses him of breaking their laws and committing a great crime.

And I want us to approach this incident or this narrative this evening as a crime scene. Now for those of you who like good crime dramas and there are no shortage of them on television, whether it's Poirot or Sherlock or Agatha Christie, you will know that there are usually three phases in a crime drama.

The crime itself, the investigation, and then a trial. Those are the three factors that are structured in many crime dramas.

[29 : 04] And John does the same in his gospel here. So we want to look at the crime itself, then the investigation, and then the trial that ensues.

Well, the scene of the crime, we read in verse 1 to 9. The scene of the crime is the healing of the man. And let's visit the crime scene, as we might say.

When and where did this crime take place? Well, John tells us the when of this crime. This incident took place, verse 1, after these things, or after this.

What does that mean? After these things, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. That is some unspecified time after Jesus' second miracle, in chapter 4.

And he tells us it took place in the city of Jerusalem. Verse 2 tells us specifically where in Jerusalem the miracle, or the incident, took place.

[30 : 13] It was by the Sheep Gate, and by a pool called Bethesda. Verse 2 tells us that, doesn't it? Now there is in Jerusalem, by the Sheep Gate, a pool which is called, in the Hebrew, Bethesda.

Bethesda means house of pity, and house of mercy. Well, when did the alleged crime take place? John tells us it was at the feast of the Jews, verse 1.

Now, although the feast is not named here in John's Gospel, it was most likely the feast of the Passover, or the feast of Tabernacles. The Jews, the children of Israel, had many feasts that they had to undertake, and one of those was the feast of the Passover, or the feast of Tabernacles.

And as Jesus came to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast himself, as a godly Jew, he entered through the Sheep Gate, which opened out to a pool called Bethesda.

And this pool, we discover from verse 3, was surrounded by sick people, people who were lame, who were blind, and who were withered.

[31 : 37] That group of people sat there because they believed the pool had some special healing properties, and powers. Look at verse 4.

It says in verse 4, In these lay, verse 3, In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind and lame and paralysed. And there was a man there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

It was believed that an angel, it was believed that an angel would periodically come and descend to the pool and stir its waters, triggering its healing powers and the first person who managed to get into the pool would be cured of whatever disease they had.

It doesn't tell us specifically that in the passage, but that's what the superstition perhaps was.

Something certainly went on at this pool of Bethesda, and as we shall see, something certainly went on when Jesus came to meet this man.

people who were desperately ill waited day after day, and in this case, year after year, hoping for an opportunity to be healed.

[33 : 02] And on this day when the Lord Jesus arrived at the pool, he met a man who had been ill for 38 years. Now at that time, at this time when John recorded these events, age expectancy was probably only about 40 to 45 years, so this man had spent the most of his life as a paraplegic, lying expectantly but impotently at the pool of Bethesda.

It was a very long time to be sick. Not sure, we're not told exactly what the illness was, but the man was probably a paraplegic, so in effect, he had spent his entire life by the pool in hope, waiting to be healed, but we're told that he was powerless, powerless to reach those waters because of his disability.

He had no one to help him. As the Lord Jesus asks him the question, the sick man answers the Lord Jesus and we'll come to the Lord Jesus' question in a moment, but we see the hopeless condition of the man in verse 7, 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.

When Jesus met this man this day, his life was about to change. Jesus saw him lying there. Verse 6 tells us that Jesus knew all about him.

He knew his condition and he knew how long he had been like that and Jesus had compassion on him. Jesus knew everything about him, how he was crippled, how he was hopeless, powerless, friendless, no one to help him.

[35 : 25] And Jesus asks him a strange question in verse 6, doesn't he? It appears to be an absurd question.

He says, Do you wish to be well? Do you hope to be made whole? Well, why wouldn't a man who had been ill and crippled for 38 years want to be well?

Well, the man's response reveals his exasperation, doesn't it, and desperation. The man says, Sir, I have no man.

You see, all of Jesus' signs that he performs pointed people to far deeper spiritual truths. He often asked people questions that seem to us kind of obvious.

Later on, he'll perform another sign where he will feed 5,000 with five loaves and two fish. And on that occasion, he'll ask another question, What food do you have?

[36 : 39] He asks the man here the question, Do you want to be made whole? Surely it is to enable the man to understand how desperately ill and hopeless his condition is so that he may see his great need of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus then gives him three orders, doesn't he, in verse 8? he tells a man who's been crippled for 38 years, who has no hope of getting in to that pool at Bethesda, and the Lord Jesus turns to the man and he says, Rise, take up your mat and walk.

The Lord Jesus asks him to do something that is impossible for him to do. And yet, his command was completely and instantaneously fulfilled because, verse 9 tells us, immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked.

What an amazing display of the glory of God, an amazing sign, an amazing miracle, but more than a miracle, that amazing sign.

As Donald Carson says in his commentary, says, the healed individual was not staggering off, in ambiguous health, but leaving with the bodily strength necessary to carry his mat.

[38 : 19] Jesus Christ immediately healed the man. There was no doubt about it, there was no ambiguity about it. The man took up his bed and walked.

So, what's the crime? This is all amazing, isn't it? This is all good news. You would think it would be a great thing if the Lord Jesus even was here today to do that amongst people, and it would be fantastic, wouldn't it?

Think what it would do for NHS budgets, if the Lord Jesus was here today and was able to say to people, take up your bed and walk and make blind men see again and deaf men hear.

So, what's the crime? Well, it all kicks off, doesn't it, as we say in verse 9 and 10. Look at verse 9 and 10. And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed, and he walked.

Now, that day was the Sabbath. You know, if we were filming this, if there was a film made of this, I don't know if you watch many films, but, you know, time and time again in the Gospels, as soon as we read these words, now the day was a Sabbath, you can hear the mysterious music.

[39 : 49] Those of you who know the film Jaws can just think when that shark approaches the boat, there is sinister music that you hear.

And every time you read this in the Gospel, now the day was the Sabbath, you know something ominous, there is going to be something kicking off here with the Lord Jesus. The lame man could now walk true and great and fantastic, but he had picked up his bed on the Sabbath.

And according to the Jewish laws, according to the Jewish leaders' laws, that was deemed as work. And no work was allowed on the Sabbath day according to their regulations.

And so a serious crime had been committed and the Jews weren't about to let it go and they weren't allowed to let the Lord Jesus get off with it. And so they instigated the investigation.

[41 : 01] And the investigation we see in verses 10 down to 13. The number of Jews see this man carrying his mat and they rush to question him.

And the man is interrogated and examined by this group of Jewish leaders. It's the Sabbath day and it's not permissible for you to carry your mat, they say.

Who told you you could do this, they say. You see, the Jewish rabbis had devised about 39 classes of work that were not permitted to be done on the Sabbath day according to them.

Which included carrying anything from one place to another. You see, these Jewish leaders, as we saw the last time when we were talking about the commandments, they were big on rules.

They were big on rules. And especially about the Sabbath and what people were allowed and weren't allowed to do. And they were more interested in rules than in mercy.

[42 : 16] They were more interested in their rules than in God himself. God had indeed given laws regarding the Sabbath, laws that were good and are good for our well-being.

A day free from work, as we saw the last time. A day free to be given to him and in his worship. Rest from six days labor, all for our good.

world. But the Jewish leaders had added layers upon layers and it had become burdensome for everybody. And it carries on today.

The only thing that you were allowed to carry outdoor were things that you actually wore according to the Jewish leaders. It was farcical, really.

they say to this man, you're working on the Sabbath day. When did carrying your bed become work?

[43 : 25] the man can only blurt out under questioning that it was a person that had made him whole, who had told him to take up and pick up his mat.

And the healed man didn't actually know who it was that had healed him. Because Jesus were told in verse 13 had slipped away because there had been a great crowd and he didn't encourage popularity around him at that time.

You see, the law that Jesus had supposedly broken is not found in the scriptures. He was being accused of breaking one of these 39 man-made rules.

That was the alleged crime here in this chapter 5 of John's Gospel. Jesus had slipped away, but look at verse 14.

The Lord Jesus then meets the healed man in the temple. Jesus found this man in the temple and the man was healed. Jesus said, Behold, you have become well.

[44 : 36] Do not sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to you. And it's at that point that the man goes away and he tells the Jews it was Jesus who had made him well.

you see, the man's response, really, as we say in Glasgow, was to shop the Lord Jesus in. He sided with the Jews and their false religion, it appears.

Jesus had called him to go to repent and sin no more, because there's a greater judgment that might lie ahead for him.

and only at that point did the lame man realise that it was Jesus who had healed him. The man then hurries off to tell the Jews the identity of his healer.

And with this new evidence from their informant, the Jews in verse 16, pursue and persecute Jesus.

[45 : 54] What's the reason? Well, he was doing those things on the Sabbath. Oh, the crime. Oh, the crime. And so the trial takes place, the investigation, the Jewish leaders have now found out who the culprit of this crime is.

And Jesus is now put on the witness stand for questioning. Two serious charges are produced against him.

Firstly, he has violated the Sabbath. Secondly, as we shall see, there's a charge of blasphemy that Jesus has claimed to be God himself.

What about this charge of violating the Sabbath? They state that Jesus had provoked the lame man, had encouraged the lame man to break the law.

The amazing thing is that these Jewish authorities never once refer or commend the Lord Jesus for the healing. That's just incidental to them.

[47 : 04] They are more interested in their laws than in the fact that a man who's been crippled for 38 years is now healed. That would be a cause surely for rejoicing, but not with the Jewish authorities.

They were not interested in this lame man at all, or the fact that he had been healed. They just focus on the day in which Jesus performed this sign.

They charge Jesus, the Lord Jesus, with working and leading others to work on the Sabbath. That was the big issue for them. Look at how Jesus responds to his accusers in verse 17.

He says, My father is working until now and I myself am working. Jesus, the Lord Jesus, has knowingly lit the blue touch paper.

he could have healed this man on any other day, but he chose the Sabbath deliberately. He has turned the tables on his accusers.

[48 : 23] The Jews had built up such restrictions and laws around the Sabbath that they eventually had to deal with whether God himself, through the works of preservation and providence in this world, was violating the Sabbath day also.

God had created the world in six days, and he rested on the seventh, but God continues to uphold this world that you and I and these Jewish leaders live in, and he sustains it every day, including the Sabbath day.

And that's what the Lord Jesus meant when he said, my father is working until now. God is still upholding this world seven days of the week, the Lord Jesus is saying.

So are you accusing him of working, he's saying? Are you accusing the one that you say you love and honour and obey? Are you accusing the God of eternity that he's still breaking the Sabbath? this incensed them. Not only because their logic and man-made rules didn't stack up, but by saying what he said, the Lord Jesus was claiming equality with God.

[49 : 50] He was saying that he was equal with God. He says in verse 17, my father is working until now and I myself am working.

He's claiming equality with God. He's claiming to be God. And his works, he claims, were the works of God.

And that wasn't lost on the Jewish leaders. verse 18, because verse 18 tells us, for this reason, therefore, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him.

What reason? Well, he was claiming to be God and he was claiming something that they disapproved of. And so, for this reason, therefore, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but also calling God his father, making himself equal with God.

You see, the second charge was this of blasphemy then. You see, to claim equality with God was blasphemous. And blasphemy was a capital offence worthy of death.

[51 : 19] And if they could trap the Lord Jesus on that count, then they could justify capital punishment and putting him to death, which is what they were wanting to do throughout his whole public ministry.

And they would continue to pursue that line throughout his entire life. The Lord Jesus would go on to defend himself against these charges of blasphemy.

The only way his remarks could not be considered blasphemous was if he really was who he claimed to be, the son of God, God's Messiah.

Messiah. And that's exactly what this third sign was pointing to. Jesus' third sign revealed his glory as the son of God, God's Messiah, the one who has ability to heal those who are helpless and hopeless.

And he's the one to be believed in. That's why John has recorded these signs, these seven signs for us. They all point to who Jesus Christ is, but these Jewish leaders missed it completely.

[52 : 50] On another occasion, he referred to them as the blind leaders of the blind, and that's what they were. As we spoke to the children this morning, they were in darkness, and they couldn't see, and yet they thought they could see.

Now, this third sign, this third miracle, reveals the Lord Jesus' power to heal lame people, and to do it instantaneously.

It revealed too that he is the Lord of the Sabbath. It reveals Jesus also as the judge of the universe, because they tried to put the Lord Jesus on trial, and yet he turned the tables on them, and they came under his judgment.

It's a further evidence in John's gospel, that Jesus Christ is God's son, the Messiah, the one to be believed in.

God's will, is there a lesson for us in this, or is it just a narrative that took place 2000 years ago?

Well, like the lame man, we by nature, are unable to walk with God.

[54 : 28] and so the question comes to all of us this evening because we're people by nature who cannot have fellowship and communion with God because we're sinful and God is holy and God cannot tolerate sin in his presence so we all have a problem by nature we're unable to walk with God and so the question does come to us as it came to this man which appeared a rather absurd question at the time but it comes to us today also from the Lord Jesus do you want to be made whole?

do you want to be able to walk with God? that's why you were created that's the reason that you're living to walk with God and to have fellowship with him but you're in a hopeless condition you and I by nature are hopeless we have nobody else to help us to be healed to be ransomed and forgiven and the command to the man at the pool once he was healed comes to us to go and sin no more Christ's healing in his life meant that he had to change his ways to go and sin no more Christ displayed his glory in this third sign his ability his soul ability his exclusive ability to bring us to God to walk with God that's what the sign is about it's a great miracle it's wonderful in itself but what does it point to?

it points to the Lord Jesus who is the one that can make us all whole and fit for fellowship with God well may God bless these thoughts to us we're going to sing in closing the hymn on your hymn sheet or on your bulletin Saviour thy dying love thou gavest me nor should I ought withhold my Lord from thee in love my soul would bow my heart fulfil its vow some offering bring thee now something for thee give me verse 3 says a faithful heart likeness to thee that each departing day henceforth may see some work of love begun some deed of kindness done some wanderer sought and won something for thee when we come to Christ it's meant to make a difference in our walk a difference in our lifestyle and that's what this hymn is about we'll stand to sing hopefully we know the tune and we'll stand to sing to God's praise if we can this whole hymn thank you does it till ■■ if we can die ofnych our we also pin could which is going can troisième

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[60 : 22] Amen. Let's just close with a benediction.

Now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen.