

Rise take up your bed and walk

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[0 : 00] And just for a short while we might turn our attention to John chapter 5, we take verse 8. John chapter 5, verse 8.

Let's read again at verse 5. A certain man was there at the pool of Bethesda, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, And wilt thou be made whole? the impotent man answered, Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool, but while I am coming another stepeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked, and on the same day was the Sabbath.

And then at verse 14 it says, Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest the worst thing come unto thee.

Rise, take up thy bed and walk. Now it would appear that John, as he is called John the Evangelist, is more concerned with Christ's doctrines than with his miracles.

[1 : 29] He doesn't record many of the miracles, not as many as Matthew, Mark or Luke records, but when he does record a miracle, it's in order to show us an important truth.

And here in the incident at the pool of Bethesda, it's to show us that Jesus is one with his Father. That Jesus and the Father are one.

And when you and I look at all these miracles, whether they be in the gospel according to John, or whether they be in the other gospels, they are all an evidence to us of the divine sonship of Christ. They clearly show, in an undisputed way, that Christ is none other than what he claimed to be, and what is claimed for him, that he is God's Son.

Now let's look for a little while at this impotent man. Like so many of the objects of Christ's mercy, this man suddenly appears on the scene and then just as quickly he vanishes away.

[2 : 47] We are not told where he came from, we are not told anything about his background, not told anything about his life, not told much about his affliction, only that he was an impotent man.

The word impotent used here means weakness, without having strength. And it would appear that as far as this man was concerned, he had no strength at all.

He lay at this pool day after day, year after year. Indeed for 38 odd years, he was lying at this pool. No strength in his legs, no strength probably in his arms.

It was a case of almost total paralysis. He had to depend on the help of others. That's why he said to Jesus, when the pool is in a state of agitation, there is no one that can help me into it so that I might be cured when it's in this state of agitation.

At any rate, what we do find is that Jesus associated his affliction with his sins.

[4 : 12] That's why Jesus said to him later on, see that you don't sin, lest a worse thing come on you. It might have been that 38 years ago, or perhaps some 40 years ago now, he had committed some particular sin.

Whatever that sin was, we don't know. But it left him in this state of paralysis. You know how sometimes you find that.

Some man, some woman, they get involved in some sinful incident in life. It leaves its mark. And the mark can never be eradicated.

It's there. It's like the old evangelist that used to take the open-air services and he used to say to the people that he was a drunkard, or had been a drunkard until the grace of God converted him.

But, he used to say, the marks are still there. Sin does leave sometimes its mark.

[5 : 23] And with regard to this man, it had left its mark in this terrible form. And we note here, of course, the severity of his affliction. His case, it would seem to be, was evidently one of the worst of

those who had gathered here at the pool.

He was required to be prostrate upon those dead. Absolutely dependent upon others. And when the pool was in this state of agitation, which gave to it some healing property of whatever kind, we don't know, but it had some healing property.

When it was in this state of agitation, he was unable to make the necessary movement that would bring him to the edge of the pool.

And indeed, when Jesus came to him, perhaps he thought that Jesus was only going to be some sort of a friend. And that's why he said to Jesus in his pathetic words, Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool.

But while I am coming, another step is in before me. As if he was saying to Jesus, if only I had someone to help me. If only there was someone there who could drag me down and push me in.

[6 : 58] But there is no one there. And not only do we notice how desperately incapable he was, but this affliction that he had was of long standing.

As John describes the man's case in some detail, he tells us that he had this infirmity for thirty and eight years. This paralysis, this nervous frustration, it struck him early in life.

Possibly he was one of the saddest sights around the pool of Bethesda. This paralysis had robbed him of well nigh half his life.

half the allotted span was spent in this state of just lying there maimed at the pool.

And perhaps even now the man was realizing that his condition was absolutely hopeless. There would never be any chance of betterment.

[8 : 10] But we go on to notice the cure of Christ. On this Sabbath day, as Jesus made his way among the multitude of impotent folks, it tells us that there were the blind, the halt, the wither.

We can see this motley crowd of people with their different ailments, their different illnesses, their different diseases. And as Jesus walked among this crowd of people, from among that suffering humanity, he selected this one man to be healed.

Now you will notice that, that it was Jesus who selected this one man to be healed. Do you remember how on one occasion Jesus reminded the Jews that there were many widows living in Israel during the time of Elijah the prophet when the salmon was in the land.

But the prophet was sent to only one, a widow who lived in Sidon. Likewise, says Jesus, in the days of Elisha, there were many lepers, but only one was cleansed and that was Naaman.

Why should it have been that in the days of Elijah only one widow was selected? Why should it have been in the days of Elisha that only one man, Naaman the leper, should have been cleansed of his disease?

[9 : 50] And why on this occasion, when there were so many different cases of need like blind, halt, and wither, that Jesus selects this one for healing?

And it's not the man who asks to be made whole, it's Jesus who asks this man if he is willing to be made whole.

Well, here again we see the sovereignty of God in operation. It's not for us to question the wisdom of God why he does this to one and not to another.

At any rate, it was this one man that Jesus selected for his healing. A supernatural phenomena or phenomenon occurred at this pool at certain seasons.

John tells us that an angel went down and then troubled the waters and whoever was first in after the water had been agitated was immediately made whole of whatever ailment he had.

[11 : 02] Now this is a very strange thing to read. We do know that angels did interpose in a miraculous manner in New Testament times.

There is for instance the case of Peter the great apostle who was in prison and you recall how he was released from that prison in a miraculous way.

An angel came the angel opened each of the gates took the chains from off the arms of Peter and led him safely out with the prison.

Then again you recall how Philip the evangelist was in a certain place on one occasion when an angel came to him and directed him to go to Gaza to the desert where he would meet with the Ethiopian eunuch and there be the means of his conversion.

Angels of course are God's messengers they do his bidding and here at the pool of Bethesda one of the angels was sent at a certain season in order to trouble the water and in order to impart to the water healing power so that the first who entered it in its state of agitation was healed.

[12 : 35] Well this man had lain as we have already said for a long time hoping that one day he might benefit from the healing properties imparted to the pool.

But the 38 years had gone and perhaps not only had these years gone but now all hope was gone and in order to arouse hope and in order to create expectancy Jesus says to this man wilt thou be made whole whole.

Are you giving up? Have you lost all confidence? Have you lost all faith? Will you be made whole? Perhaps the man thought that Jesus would offer to assist him at the opportune moment when the season came round for the pool to be stirred.

at any rate he points to Jesus and he says I've got no one to help me. And it would seem too that Jesus knew this man but the man of course didn't know who Jesus was because when the Jews asked him who it was that healed him he replied that it was he didn't know to begin with who it was but later on he said it was Jesus who had made him whole.

Sir he says to Jesus I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool and here he shows his reliance upon the healing power of the water and upon the assistance of those who could get him into the water.

[14 : 28] but Jesus now calls this man attention to himself and he now says to this man look if you want to be really healed don't look at the water don't consider the angel who comes from heaven to impart power to the water don't look at anyone else around this pool who will help you into the water but now says Jesus look on me consider me put your trust in me put your confidence in me and he says to the man rise take up thy bed and walk it was a startling thing for Jesus to say to that man who for almost 30 years for almost 40 years had been a cripple it was a staggering thing to say to him rise take up thy bed and it would have been a mockery to this man for any other man to say that to him but it wasn't a mockery when Christ said it to him and what was the result immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked the weakness you see gave way to strength power which he had never had before began to surge through this man the legs the arms they were at once made strong he was now able to do what for 38 years he had never been able to do he had been incapable of doing and it tells us he rose from his bed and began to walk and you see here that Jesus not only commanded him to rise and walk but he also commanded him to take up his bed and walk and as this man took up his bed it was a testimony to all those around the pool a testimony to the

Jews but the man was completely cured you see after 40 years of frustration we wouldn't expect a man like this to do that sort of thing after 40 years the man would begin walking if he did walk at all he would begin walking very unsteadily it would take him weeks and months to get the strength back into his legs and ankle bones and feet and to be able to walk after a man has had an operation you don't expect him just to get out of his bed as soon it's over and begin to walk and to do his work this is the uniqueness of the miracles of Jesus and it's not only that the man begins to walk but he is so completely recovered that he is able to bend down to fold up that bed that he has been lying on and to walk with it and if the miracle shows us anything at all doesn't it show us that this man Jesus of Nazareth is no ordinary man that this man Jesus of Nazareth is what he claimed to be

God's son because he is doing the things that only God alone can do supposing you were crippled or you know someone who is crippled who is there that's there to give him back his strength or to give her back her strength can you go into their home today and say rise take up your bed walk not even the most advanced surgery can give such instantaneous healing as was given to this man on this occasion it was a blessed thing indeed for that man on that memorable day when Jesus visited the pool of Bethesda and when as Jesus walked around the halt the maim the blind he selected this man and said to him will you be made whole now after being questioned by the

Jews about carrying his bed on the Sabbath the man went to the temple in order to express his gratitude to God for his deliverance and it was while he was in the temple that Jesus met him once more and here you see not only the power of Jesus in operation but you also notice the omniscience of Jesus because Jesus met him in the temple and like many of these miracles we see this divine attribute of omniscience which only belongs to God being revealed in Jesus our Lord you see Jesus shows to the man in the temple that he knew all about him and he knew the reason for his impotence it was just like the Samaritan woman all over again you remember how the Samaritan woman afterwards when she had had the interview with Jesus went back to the village and she said to the men of the village come and see a man who told me all things that ever I did is not this the Christ and it was after having his sin recalled to remembrance that the man realized

who his great benefactor was that it was none other than Jesus of Nazareth and here you see Christ's tenderness and not only his tenderness but his faithfulness with this man you see for 38 years the man had lived in suffering he had lived in weakness it was the penalty for his sin whatever that sin or sins was or were that had caused his impotence but Christ recognized even in this early stage of his cure the tendency the liability for the man to go back to his old former way of sin again as

[22 : 04] Marcus Dodds puts it Christ recognized in him even in the first days of restored health a liability to return to his sin at any rate what Jesus says to the man is this behold thou art made whole then he goes on you see to say to him sin no more don't go back to that sin don't be tempted to go back to what you did forty years ago sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you you see sin is an awful master sin is an awful thing when you dabble in it when you dabble with it and sin has a terrible way of paying you back if it doesn't pay you back in this life it most certainly pays you back in the life to come and there was the possibility you see of the man going back to his sin the sin that had caused his terrible condition and for that reason

Jesus bluntly warns him not to return to his folly not return to that foolishness that had caused his impairment otherwise the consequences could be even more grave than they had been previously sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee what was the man's response well he departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole some have wondered was the man so ungrateful to Jesus that out of envy he went and informed the Jews about Jesus but it's one of the old church fathers a man called

Chrysostom who points out that if this man had gone out of envy to the Jews then he would have told the Jews that it was Jesus who had ordered him to take up his bed on the Sabbath day in order to incriminate Jesus in his sin of Sabbath breaking no we can be well sure of this that the man out of gratitude to Christ and for the cure that he had received went and told the Jews who it was that had wrought this work of mercy and imparted this blessing to him Jesus saith unto him rise take up thy bed and walk and immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked and on the same day was the Sabbath this wasn't a case of

Sabbath breaking on the part of Jesus it was a work of necessity a work of mercy and that's why Jesus did it now as we conclude our service what do we learn from an incident like this well we learn this surely that sin is a terrible thing it's a terrible thing and sin sometimes brings its own penalty in this present life we've known that ourselves perhaps we've gone astray we've done something wrong at one stage or another and we look back and we could only wish to God that we could go back and undo what we then did but we can't sometimes it brings its own penalty but it certainly brings its penalty in the life to come and that's what we must be more afraid of not just what it does to us in this life but more afraid of what it's going to do to us in the life to come when we pass the time barrier when we step away from this present time scale into the world to come that's when we've got to really be afraid it's necessary to get rid of sin it's necessary to keep away from sin and how can we get rid of sin how can we keep away from it by coming to Christ and Christ is able to resolve the problem able to resolve the difficulty and just as Jesus dealt in mercy and in compassion with this poor man these many years ago he is able to exercise the same mercy and the same compassion upon you and upon me today

Jesus stands before us and in another sense he says to us rise now begin to walk now sin no more may God grant that we will do that let us pray O Lord our God we give thee thanks for the Saviour who is able to do in and for us beyond our asking and we thank thee that we can come to thee with all our problems and difficulties our sins our failures our faults and we bless thee that the tenderness and the compassion of the Saviour experienced in that first century long ago is still the tenderness and the compassion and the love that we can experience today be with us now we pray thee bless us in our going out in our coming in and forgive all our sins for Christ's sake

[28 : 58] Amen