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Do You Want To Be Made Well?

John 5:1-18

The third sign that John has chosen for his gospel is the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda which is a beautiful picture of each of us as well as sinful humanity.

There are three movements in our text.

- I. The location of the healing. vs. 1-4
- II. The invitation for the healing. vs. 5-9
- III. The examination of the healing. vs. 10-18

I. The location of the healing. vs. 1-4

- A. The place is identified for us as being at Jerusalem. vs. 1
 1. The time is marked by three things.
 - a. The phrase "after this" referring to the healing of the Nobleman's son.
 - b. There was a "feast of the Jews" at the time, which is not identified.
 - 1) Some believe it is Passover which means that John would identify four Passovers through the duration of our Lord's ministry. 2:23, 5:1, 6:4, 13:1
 - 2) Others think it is either Pentecost or Tabernacles.

3) Still others think perhaps it refers to Purim instituted in the book of Esther through the defeating of Haman.

* The arguments are lengthy and unimportant!

- c. The fact that Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
 - 1) Every time you read in the Scriptures, it is "up to Jerusalem".
 - 2) Jerusalem is 2500 feet above sea level.
 - 3) Everyone who leaves Jerusalem goes down to wherever they go.
 - 4) Jerusalem is the city of God, the great King!
2. Jesus had been in Galilee prior to this.
 - a. He had left Judea to go to the Galilee and He went through Samaria to save the Samaritan women and many others. 4:3-4
 - b. He went into Galilee and declared that a prophet is without honor in His own country. 4:44
 - c. He arrived at Cana and healed the Nobleman's son and saved his household. 4:46, 53
 - d. Now He is back in Judea, in the city of Jerusalem.

- B.** The place is further identified for us as being at a particular place within Jerusalem. vs. 2
1. The place a pool called in the Hebrew, Bethesda which means "house of mercy".
 2. The pool is said to of been by the Sheep Gate.
 - a. The gate was named due to the sheep that would be brought there for sacrifice.
 - b. The gate is identified for us in Nehemiah. 3:1, 32,12:39
 - c. Some identify it as the St. Stephen's gate, today it is called the Lions gate.
 3. The pool is described as having five porches, a large area which is visible today in Jerusalem.
- C.** The place was occupied by a number of people. vs. 3-4
1. The people are not the most desirable of society. vs. 3
 - a. The sick.
 - b. The blind.
 - c. The lame.
 - d. The paralyzed.
 2. The purpose the people gathered was to be healed at the moving of the water. vs. 3e-4
 - a. An angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred the water.

- b. Then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well.
 - c. The healing was regardless of the disease.
3. Some have rejected verse four as not authentic because it is not found in three or four manuscripts but it is found in all other ones.
- a. The fact that an angel was used to do this should not surprise any of us for angels are God's ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. Heb. 1:14
 - b. The Old Testament is full of accounts where God used angels for his purposes.
 - * One angel went out and killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night!
 - c. The New Testament equally bears witness to their presence and involvement in the affairs of man and the church.
 - * An angel delivered Peter from prison and he thought he was dreaming!

The location of the healing was at Jerusalem, at the pool of Bethesda!

II. The invitation for the healing. vs. 5-9

- A.** The man is identified not by name but by his condition. vs. 5
1. The certain man had an infirmity for thirty-eight years.
 - a. He is not said to of been at the pool for the thirty-eight years.
 - b. He must of been well known to those at Jerusalem.
 - c. He must of certainly been known by those at the pool.
 2. The man is one of many at the pool.
 - a. Sick.
 - b. Blind.
 - c. Lame.
 - d. Paralyzed.
- B.** The Lord Jesus initiates the conversation. vs. 6-7
1. The facts Jesus knew. vs. 6a-b
 - a. Jesus saw him lying there.
 - * God is One who sees all things and sees them as they really are and not as they appear.
 - b. Jesus knew that he already had been in that condition a long time.
 - * He knew all that was in man. 2:25
 2. The first and only question Jesus asked him, “Do you want to be made well?” vs. 6c-d
 - a. The question by one who is healthy would seem to be a cruel one.
- b.** The question has to be measured by the one who is asking the question.
- 1) Does he have the means to help?
 - 2) Does he have the ability to perform the healing?
- c.** Jesus has turned water into wine bring joy to a wedding.
- d.** Jesus has healed the Nobleman's son from afar.
- 3.** The frank answer of the man. vs. 7
- a. He is friendless, “Sir I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up.”
 - b. He is frustrated, “While I am coming, another steps down before me.”
- C.** The Lord Jesus commands his healing. vs. 8-9
1. Jesus tells the man three things. vs. 8
 - a. Arise, get up!
 - b. Take up your bed, the thin mattress he was laying on!
 - c. Walk, do what you can not do!
 2. The man could of done several things at this point.
 - a. He could of rebuked Jesus for mocking Him.
 - b. He could of told Jesus how often he had tried but to no avail.
 - c. He could of argued with Jesus.
 3. The scriptures tell us that immediately the man was made well. vs. 9

- a. The word immediately "utheos" means instantly, at the moment and found only four times in John.
 - 1) For the healing of this man. 5:9
 - 2) For the arrival of the ship to the other side of Galilee. 6:21
 - 3) For Judas Ischariot who went out to betray Jesus. 13:30
 - 4) For Peter's betrayal immediately when the rooster crowed. 18:27
- b. The healing was not dependent on the faith of the man as other times in the Scriptures.
- c. The healing was not progressive as others in Scripture.
- d. The healing was instant and complete by the sovereign work of God.
 - * Jesus did the same to the man with the withered hand as He restored it in the synagogue. Mk. 3:5

The invitation for the healing was honored!

III. The examination of the healing. vs. 10-18

- A. The Jews viewed the healing from the legal perspective. vs. 10-13
 1. The response of the Jews was unnatural. vs. 10
 - a. They communicated to the man that it was the Sabbath.

- * The Sabbath was one of the ten commandments. Ex. 20:8-11
- b. They communicated to the man that it was not lawful for him to carry his bed.
 - * The Jews had 39 different classifications of works on the Sabbath.
- c. They were not even concerned with the fact that he had been healed.
 - 1) They were concerned with authority and power.
 - 2) They were concerned with laws and rules not people.
- 2. The response of the man is two-fold. vs. 11
 - a. A man made me well and whole.
 - b. The same man commanded me to take up my bed and walk.
- 3. Their response was to know the identity of the man. vs. 12
- 4. The commentary of John tell us that the man healed did not now who Jesus was for He faded into the crowd. vs. 13

- B. The Lord Jesus viewed the healing from an eternal perspective. vs. 14-15
 1. Afterwards Jesus found the man in the Temple. vs. 14a

- a. The man certainly went to show himself to the priest to confirm his healing. Lk. 17:14, Lev. 13
 - b. The man would offer an offering for his cleansing.
 - 2. The man is told by Jesus that he has been made whole, that he recognize the mercy of God bestowed upon him.
 - 3. The man is told by Jesus, to sin no more referring to a life of continuous sin.
 - * The implication is that his sins had been forgiven, for these are the very words Jesus told the woman caught in adultery. Jn. 8:11
 - 4. The man is warned by Jesus if in fact he does not turn from a life of continuous sin, “Lest a worse thing come upon you”.
 - a. The implication is that his infirmity was related to his life of sin in this particular case but we should not conclude this in every case of illness.
 - b. The implication also is that a worse condition could come upon him.
 - c. The implication could very well be eternal separation for God.
 - 5. The man departed and told the Jews that it had been Jesus who had healed him. vs. 15
- C. The Jews viewed Jesus from a heretical perspective. vs. 16-18
- 1. They sought to persecute and kill Jesus because He had done these things on the Sabbath. vs. 16
 - * The Jewish leaders never forgave Jesus and persecuted Him continuously to kill Him. 5:16, 18, 6:41, 7:1, 19, 25, 30, 8:37, 40, 59, 9:16, 29, 34, 10:31, 39
 - a. Jesus declared that the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath. Mk. 2:28
 - b. Jesus declared that the Sabbath was violated by the priests and Levites in their service.
 - c. Jesus declared that the act of circumcision on the eighth day also violated the Sabbath but they did it.
 - d. Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes in that they loosed their animals to lead them to drink water and that if they fell into a pit they would rescue them on the Sabbath. Lk. 13:15, 14:5
 - e. Jesus asked if it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day as they watched Him intently to see if He would heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath. Mk. 3:4
 - f. Jesus declared Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath as His disciples were

- accused of breaking the Sabbath as they ate wheat in the field. Mk. 2:28
2. They were told by Jesus that He was one with the Father. vs. 17
 - a. My Father has been working till now.
 - b. I have been working.
 - * The discourse that follows deals with these two reasons. vs. 18
 3. They sought the more to kill Jesus for two reasons. vs. 18
 - a. Jesus continuously broke the Sabbath.
 - * The word “broke” means to destroy or do away with, as Jesus continually violated the Sabbath after their understanding.
 - b. Jesus made Himself out to be equal with God.
 - * Paul tells us that being in the form of God, He did not think it robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant in the likeness of a man, humbled Himself and was obedient to death. Phil. 2:6-8

The examination of the healing was through religious eyes!

IV. The application to our own lives.

- A. Every person has weaknesses and failures that unless God intervenes we are doomed to live a life of frustration and hopelessness like this man.
 1. It might be a temper.
 2. It might be a struggle with lust.
 3. It might be with self-righteousness.
 4. It may be with pride.
- B. Everyone of us must equally answer the question Jesus asked, whether we want to be made whole on what ever level.
 1. We are not to be looking to some pool to heal us but Jesus.
 2. We are not to hesitate in our answer.
 3. We are to obey.
- C. Everyone of us have to believe God’s word and walk.
 1. God always provides the means by which to accomplish what He commands.
 2. God is always honored as we walk in the light.
- D. Everyone of us must turn from sin that so easily besets us and hinders us lest a worse thing come upon us.
 1. By acknowledging it.
 2. By confessing it.
 3. By abandoning it.
- E. Everyone of us need to give testimony to the glory of Jesus for what He has done.
 1. The forgiveness of our sins.

2. The gift of eternal life.
 3. The love He has put in our hearts.
- F.** Everyone of us may in fact receive persecution for our faith since Jesus is no longer here to receive it Himself.
1. This is accompanied with the promise of reigning with Him.
 2. This is what the prophets went through.
 3. This is the one thing that is stated clearly in the new Testament.
- G.** Everyone of us rather than walking away like the man that was healed should go back and help others like us, knowing the pain and frustration.
1. Knowing the pain and frustration of such a condition.
 2. Being merciful as God has been merciful to me.
 3. To communicate the love of God imparted to me.

Conclusion

This is the third sign John chose for his Gospel, the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda.

- I.** The location of the healing was at Jerusalem, at the pool of Bethesda!
- II.** The invitation for the healing was honored!
- III.** The examination of the healing was through religious eyes!