

## John 5:1-18

*<sup>1</sup> After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

1 Feast of the Jews – probably Tabernacles when they remembered the time of wandering in the wilderness and God’s faithful provision.

*<sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.*

2 While the location was known, skeptics didn’t believe the pools existed. Then in the 1960s the priests who are over the area excavated and found the foundations of the pool. It was also mentioned in the Copper Scroll found in the Qumran caves. The fifth colonnade divided the two pools. Sheep were washed here before sacrifice.

*<sup>3</sup> In these lay a multitude of invalids--blind, lame, and paralyzed.*

3 Those desperately seeking healing would come to this pool as a last resort. Verse 4 was added later and mentions the people thought an angel would stir the water and the first in would be healed.

*<sup>5</sup> One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.*

5 The life expectancy of a Jewish male was about 40 years, so this man had been in that condition for most of the average men’s lives. Had Jesus seen him when he visited his grandparents? Tradition has their house right nearby this pool. This is the second year of Jesus’ ministry. Had he been waiting on the Holy Spirit hoping this was the time.

*<sup>6</sup> 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?"*

6 Jesus knew he had been there a long time. There were many sick people around the pool, but Jesus went to this one man. “Do you want to be well?” This is an interesting question. Some people get secure in their lifestyle. Do we want to be healed spiritually? To be whole means to let go of some things that we’ve grown comfortable with.

*<sup>7</sup> 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."*

7 He had placed his faith in a false hope. That didn’t bother Jesus. Jesus’ concern was for the man regardless. The man wanted Jesus to help him in the water when it stirred. Perhaps he was paralyzed. Jesus had picked this one man out of all the people who were there. Was it because He had seen him there for so long? Or did He see his heart and have compassion on Him?

*<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk."*

8 Try to picture it. The man’s legs suddenly fatten up. A surge of energy runs through him as nerves and sinews suddenly strengthen and bones become denser. He leaps to his feet and starts shouting. “I am healed! I am healed! Look! 38 years and

suddenly I can walk. The man just said, 'Get up!' Now I can walk!" And then see all the astonished faces of those who had lain around the pool that knew his prior condition.

*<sup>9</sup> And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.<sup>10</sup> So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed."*

9,10 The Father often had Jesus heal on the Sabbath to drive home a point. The Sabbath is not about enforcing rules. It is about worship and rest (Mark 2:27). The religious leaders had dozens of laws to interpret resting on the Sabbath. The specific rabbinical law the man was breaking was moving household items from one place to another.

What is amazing to me is that these religious leaders are so into their legalism that they can't rejoice that this man has been miraculously healed after 38 years! They are just eager to find the man that incited the invalid to "sin." God save us from the spirit of legalism! It drives more seekers away from church than anything else (except perhaps one's own desire to cling to real sin).

*<sup>11</sup> But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" <sup>12</sup> They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" <sup>13</sup> 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.*

11-13 They want to judge the man who performed the merciful miracle. That is missing the whole picture, but certainly give a picture of their hearts.

*<sup>14</sup> 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."*

14 Jesus warns the man not to sin or there may be more consequences. Not all illness is due to sin, but Jesus indicates here that some certainly is.

*<sup>15</sup> The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.*

15 The man ran back to tell the Jews. Perhaps he didn't realize their evil intent. Maybe he wanted to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah?

*<sup>16</sup> And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.*

16 They ignored the miraculous display of the mercy of God on the invalid's life, and the wonderful truth that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. And of course, it was impossible for them to see that the Father Himself manifest in Jesus is the House of Kindness, the meaning of Bethesda.

*17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."  
18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

17,18 Jews had come to the conclusion that God is always at work, bringing the rain, feeding the birds, etc. They reasoned it wasn't work for God because it was so easy for Him. Jesus is making Himself equal with God. He is saying, "The same applies to me!" as is clear in verse 18.

#### Questions

Why would Jesus go to that pool?

Why this man?

Doesn't everyone want to get well?

Why does God keep having Jesus heal on the Sabbath?

How hardhearted were the leaders?

How did Jesus declare His divinity?