

Jesus Heals a Lame Man at the Pool of Bethesda John 5:1-15

by David Servant

David Servant's sermon explores the healing of the lame man at Bethesda, emphasizing God's promises, individual faith, and the nature of divine healing.

Scripture: Exodus 15:26, Exodus 23:25, Deuteronomy 7:12, Deuteronomy 10:17, John 5:14, Romans 2:11, 1 Corinthians 12:11, Galatians 2:6, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Divine Healing", "Faith And Obedience"

Description

David Servant preaches about the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, highlighting the man's long suffering, the angel stirring the waters, and the missed opportunity for healing through faith in God's promises. He emphasizes God's desire for all to be healed through obedience and faith, using the pool as a reminder of His healing power and love for His people. Jesus' healing of the man showcases His ability to heal all and encourages trust in Him for healing, reflecting God's unchanging nature.

Transcript

Praise God for what Jesus did for this lame man at the pool of Bethesda! He had been suffering for thirty-eight years from his sickness, and perhaps had been unable to walk all that time. But he still had hope of being healed. He'd heard that an angel of the Lord would occasionally stir the waters at the pool of Bethesda. Afterwards, whoever stepped into the water first was healed of whatever ailed him. So the lame man joined many other sick people who sat around the pool each day, watching and waiting for the troubling of the waters. He had been present a number of times when the waters were previously stirred, but others who had more mobility reached the water before he did. So he kept on waiting for another opportunity, and hoped that the next time the waters were stirred, someone would care enough to help him be the first to get in.

Angels, of course, don't work independently of the Lord, and so we can be sure that the only time an angel stirred the Bethesda waters was when God sent him. So why didn't God send an angel every five minutes to stir the water so that everyone could be healed? Can we conclude from this story that it wasn't God's will for everyone there to be healed?

Actually, all the sick people at Bethesda could have been healed without ever stepping into the pool of Bethesda, because God promised health for every obedient Israelite in His covenant with them. God said

in Exodus 23:25 (NASB), "But you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst." In Deuteronomy 7:12-15, God promised the Israelites that, if they obeyed Him faithfully, He would remove all sickness from them. If any of the sick people at Bethesda had believed what God had promised, acting in faith, they would have been healed. Even if they had been disobedient to the Lord, thus not meeting the conditions of their covenant with God, they could have repented, received forgiveness, and then received healing. Anyone who disagrees with that is saying that God is a liar, and that His promises can't be trusted. It's true: He promised health to obedient Israelites!

By occasionally sending an angel to stir the waters of the pool of Bethesda, perhaps God was also trying to stir up His people by way of reminder that He was still in the healing business. Every time someone was healed, God was sending a message to all Israel that He'd spoken centuries earlier to their ancestors: "I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15:26). Surely God didn't want all those sick people waiting at the pool to think His mercy was limited, or that His love was greater for sick people who were more watchful and mobile than other sick people. Surely He wasn't trying to encourage a selfish competition that would make the majority of suffering people continual losers. No, the God whom the Bible says shows no partiality (see Deut. 10:17; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6) wanted His covenant people to know that He was their healer. And He was not choosing to heal specific ones and choosing not to heal specific others, because anyone who got into the water first was healed. Individual responsibility was a factor.

The same God who occasionally sent an angel, sent His Son one day to the same pool. And just as when the angel visited, only one person was healed that day as well. Did Jesus want to convey to the sick people present that He loved only one person enough to heal him? No, like His Father, He was trying to show them that He had the power to heal them all, hoping that all would trust Him for their healing. Numerous times in the four Gospels, we can read about Jesus healing everyone who came to Him requesting healing. This healing at the pool of Bethesda was an advertisement for Jesus and an encouragement for the rest to trust Him and be healed. This healing should encourage us today, because the Bible says that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Q. Was this lame man at the pool of Bethesda healed through his faith?

A. No, this man, unlike so many others whom Jesus healed, was not healed through his faith. Here is the evidence: First, the man was not seeking Jesus, rather, Jesus found him. Second, Jesus said nothing to him about his faith healing him as He often did with others. And third, the lame man had no idea who Jesus was, even after he'd been healed. When he first conversed with Jesus, he wasn't looking to Him as someone who could heal him. In his mind, Jesus was no different than any other person present.

This healing, then, is an example of a "gift of healing" working through Jesus. Gifts of healings operate as the Holy Spirit wills (see 1 Cor. 12:11), and faith is not necessarily a requirement for the sick person to be healed. It is a sovereign act of God.

Q. Jesus later told the man He'd healed, "Stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you" (John 5:14). What can we learn from that statement?

A. We can learn that sin can lead to God's judgment. If the healed man didn't repent and quit sinning, there was the possibility that he might wind up worse than he previously was. God is a loving God, but He is also holy. He will punish evildoers. We must be careful, however, that we don't conclude that all sick people are being punished for their sins. Then we would be guilty of passing judgment.

Application: The people of the world often need signs from God to open their hearts to the gospel. Let's pray today that God would mercifully grant that more signs and wonders would be shown to the unbelieving world. Also that even people who have no faith would be healed, that more attention would be given to the good news of Jesus Christ.

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