

# Laying by the Pool

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson's sermon emphasizes that true healing and restoration come from faith in Jesus rather than reliance on traditions or external circumstances.*

**Duration:** 1:05:49

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23-24, Isaiah 53:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 6:33, John 5:1-9, John 9:1-3, Romans 10:17

**Topics:** "Compassion", "Healing Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of a man who had been lying by a pool for 38 years, hoping for healing. The pool was surrounded by a crowd of people, with the strongest and wealthiest individuals having the closest seats. The preacher emphasizes the insensitivity of the crowd, who were only concerned with their own needs. The man by the pool had reached a point of hopelessness, feeling that no one understood or cared about his suffering. The preacher encourages the audience to not become hardened like the people in New York, but to have compassion and reach out to those in need.

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## Transcript

Laying by the pool. Oh, turn with me to John 5, please. John 5. Ah, Glenn.

Mrs. Wilkerson. Here we are. Ah, this is my farewell message.

We'll still be here next Sunday. I want you to get up for five minutes and give your farewell. Before Bob, you're preaching tomorrow? Might take you longer? I'm giving you five.

We're going to miss you people. Oh, that's the only thing about the more building a body of people together. You miss them when they're gone.

I miss seeing people from service to service. That may be a little too loud. I'm getting a little echo.

Just a little bit. Okay, thank you. I'm reading from King James.

The message, laying by the pool. Ah, after this, there was a feast of the Jews. I'm reading from King James.

And Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches or porticos. And these many, a great multitude of

impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water, for an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water.

Whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there 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, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool.

But when I'm coming, another steppeth 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.

Now Lord Jesus, I ask you to give us a hearing ear, a hearing heart, eyes to see, ears to hear. And Lord, those who need healing of body, soul, or spirit, I ask your Holy Spirit to bring forth the message of love, that it will be heard in the heart and not just the head, that your Spirit would make it real. Lord, we believe you're coming today with a healing word.

You want to bring restoration and healing to people. Lord, maybe some who are visiting here. We have many, many visitors.

You may have brought someone here especially, Lord, to hear what you've prepared. And Lord, in your love, reach their heart. In your precious holy love, reach them.

And show them the tenderness of your heart this morning. Show them how you care, that there is no getting away from your love and mercy. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen. Now, this pool of Bethesda mentioned in the 5th chapter of John was very unusual in that the Jews had made it a shrine of sorts. It was a shrine.

And the pool, they claim, was fed by an underground river. And there was a Jewish tradition. Now, I want you to listen very closely, because this scripture bothered me until the Holy Spirit began to show it to me.

You'll notice, if you have New American Standard, it says that there's two verses there that are not in many of the original manuscripts. And that's true. But this always bothered me.

But I want you to listen very closely now as we go through this. There was an unaccountable trembling of the water. At certain times, certain seasons, the water would begin to tremble.

And the first one, according to this tradition, that stepped into this pool was healed. One person. The first one into the pool was healed.

And whoever was there first got in the water, and then the waters quieted down. The pool became a kind of Jewish Lourdes. Have you ever heard of Lourdes? A Catholic shrine.

I believe it's in France, isn't it? Where thousands of people gather. And many, many professed healings. In fact, they have checked out some of these healings.

And there are very many people that are really healed. There's a shrine up in Montreal that we went to. People crawl on their knees.

Many, many people have been healed at that shrine. And the word says in verse 3, There lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. Now listen to me.

I believe John recorded this Jewish tradition exactly as the Jews believed it, so that he could show the difference between this discriminating thing that the Jews had set up and the all-inclusive healing power of Jesus Christ. He's trying to show the difference between the tradition of the Jew and the reality of Jesus Christ who walked among them. And here's what the Jews believed.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water. Whosoever then first, after the troubling of water, stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. The troubling of the water must have created a mob reaction.

Now listen to me close. Get this picture. They're waiting there.

They've come from all over Israel. They've come all the way from Judah. They've come from Samaria.

They've come for hundreds of miles around. And the tradition says that they built the four porticos, or the five porches, just to shelter the people who came. And by the way, for the mothers, there is a nursery back here.

Okay, there's a nursery. You can go out that way or in this way into a nursery if you need it. Get this picture.

They've come. Children, young men, husky young men have brought their mothers. They were crippled and withered.

They brought them. They packed food. They slept on pallets.

We would call them sleeping bags, rolled up pallets. And they're laying everywhere waiting for the troubling of the water. The tradition is that people have been healed.

Well, there's no question that people are healed because God has so created this human body. Dr. Weiss is here and he can tell you. There's marvelous healing powers in this body that are released through faith.

That are released honestly through thinking right about the body itself. Often people like bitterness... I believe bitterness can cause cancer. I've known people who have died who were bitter and they've been told if you don't get rid of that bitterness within three months you're going to die.

Five months, six months. I'm thinking right now of two people that have died just a few weeks ago of bitterness. Cancer, but it was caused by bitterness.

There's no question about it in my mind. But can you imagine all these people come from miles around. They've come through dusty roads and full of hope.

And they come to this pool of Bethesda. They're laying everywhere. Now listen, if the Jewish priest were in the temple buying and selling and making money, can you imagine what kind of mob scene this must have been when the money changers gathered around? Because where there's a crowd the money changers are there.

And I believe that there were booths set up that were selling souvenirs. I believe they were selling sleeping pallets. I believe that they were selling all kinds of Jewish relics and all kinds of souvenirs, everything.

They were selling food. They were hawking food. And waiting for the water to tremble.

Now get this picture, please, because there's a man that's been sick for 38 years and he can't even move. He probably crawls. He's withered.

He's been that way for 38 years. And he's been there 38 years. And the crowd goes up time after time.

The water's quick. And what a mob scene. Do you see the strongest, the healthiest people running over the cripples? Do you see that only the agile can get into the water first? Do you know that the rich could make their way because there was a caste system in Jerusalem at the time and the rich were always allowed to walk by? And the rich would come with their entourage and they would say, step aside.

And I believe only the rich, the wealthy, the powerful and the strong had the closest seat or the closest spot around that pool. So that pool must have just been surrounded by the strong. Because this poor withered man reached out his hands for 38 years and saying, somebody help, I can't do it by myself.

Waiting to get into that pool. And he said, when I try to get in, someone else steps ahead of me and he gets it. I was at a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting once and I was horrified.

I worked with her for five years in meetings. But she didn't know what was going on in the parking lot and I was appalled one day out in the parking lot. Thousands of cars trying to get into the parking lot in Los Angeles.

And the attendants, the parking attendants finally gave up. It was a mob scene. Every car trying to nose out somebody else.

There were bending feathers, fenders, fender benders everywhere. And you could see them gritting their teeth trying to get one slot ahead of the next guy to get into the healing meeting and get a good seat. I know Kathryn Kuhlman would have been appalled.

But I've seen this spirit. I have seen when her doors were opened, how people would elbow, because here's a young man and he's got a sick mother and he wants to get her down in the front and elbow her. And running down the aisle, pushing people aside, trying to get that good seat and get the healing.

That's exactly what I see here. I see a mob scene. I see only the strong, the wealthy being able to get in.

Now, Jesus doesn't have a part of a will of fortune kind of healing pool. That's what it is. It's a will of fortune.

This man had no chance. There's no question, like I said, that many people were healed there because they'd come distances. Many of them, I believe, believed in Jehovah God.

Many of them did not see the idolatry of such a thing. But you see, Jesus had just come from the well of Sychar and there was a woman there and he had read her life. He had seen in her heart, and he told her that she'd had five husbands, remember? The Bible says that there's nothing hidden from his eyes, that he knows all things.

You know what he told that woman? He says, I am the living water. He said, there's going to be a well of water in you, springing up into eternal life. And what Jesus was trying to say, the power's not in that pool, it's in me.

It's in me. Now, we've got to understand that every person made by that pool, every woman crippled, every blind person, already had something better than a discriminating moving of the water. They already had something from God.

They had Moses and all the promises that God gave him for Israel. They had the prophets and all the promises God gave through the prophets. They had the psalmist David.

These are the scriptures they read in their synagogues. These are the scriptures that were easily available. Every Jew knew them.

Everyone at that pool had been trained and raised under these promises. But just like the Bible said, we take Jesus for granted, they took these promises for granted. They didn't mean anything to them.

Look, this poor crippled man, all of these are waiting for the troubling of the pool. What greater promise can you have, and I'm just going to read it, you don't have to turn it, but listen to Exodus. This is what God gave through Moses for the Jew and for us.

If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and you will do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord thy God that healeth thee. Everyone at that pool had that promise. Every one of them.

It didn't mean anything to them. Listen to what David the psalmist said, and they were all aware of this. Bless the Lord O my soul, forget not all of His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who healeth all thy diseases.

They had that. And from the prophets, for I will not contend forever, says the Lord, neither will I be always mad or wroth, for the spirits have fell before me, the sins which I have made, for the iniquity of the covetous was I wroth, and I smote him, I hid me, I was wroth, I went on fervently in the way of his heart, I have seen his ways, and I will heal him, I will lead him also, I will restore comfort to him, and to all his mourners. All those people mourning, all those people sick, God said, I'll restore you if you'll return to me.

I'll heal you. Hosea the prophet said, Come and let us return to the Lord, for He hath torn you, but He will heal you. He is smitten, but He'll bind you up.

Jeremiah, Heal me, O Lord, for I shall be healed. Save me, and I shall be saved, for Thou art my praise. They had these promises.

They were quoted. Most of those people had a portion of Scripture with them, at least the law of Moses. They knew, they understood.

All the phylacteries had these little promises on them, they carried little promises. Not cards, but little handwritten Scriptures. They were trained in these.

But the Word was in their head, and was not in their heart. And when you have the Word in your head, and not your heart, you're always looking outwardly, you're looking at something beyond the Word. Well, this

hurting multitude was so blind to the Word of God.

Now listen, they were not laying there, sick and afflicted, because they were sinners, necessarily. Not all of them were afflicted because of sin. Because remember, there was a young man who was born blind, and it came to Jesus, and the disciples said, Who did sin, Master, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? The Jews believed that anybody sick or afflicted was a result of sin.

There's a doctrine in the land today, from that same Jewish tradition, that everybody sick is a result of sin. Now it can be, but not necessarily so. On all occasions, Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned.

He's born blind, he's blind now. He said, That's not the reason. Not because he sinned.

This man's not sinned, nor his parents. He said, This blind man did not sin, his parents did not sin, nor his parents, but that the work of God should be made manifest in him. God says, This is a chance.

Every sick, afflicted person offers God an opportunity of glory and praise. Every backslider that comes home offers Him an opportunity of praise and thanksgiving. Every broken heart that's healed is a testament of the power of Jesus.

Now some of them weren't there because of sickness. In fact, I see Jesus inferring that the man that was there for 38 years evidently had been tricked and a result of sin, because when He caught him later, He told him, He said, Go sin no more. Remember that? That suggested to me that he'd been a sinner.

But when he got healed, He said, Jesus said, Now, go sin no more lest the worst thing come upon you. According to the Scriptures, these people around this pool, laying around the pool, were waiting for the wrong thing. In their truth, they're waiting for the what? The moving of the waters.

Is that what the Bible tells us we're to wait on? No. David says, in Psalms, verse 5 and 6, don't turn and listen. I wait for the Lord.

My soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. In His Word do I hope. All those people sitting there, they're hoping and praying.

Can you imagine the discouragement? Can you imagine somebody being there? Well, one man, 38 years, there must have been people who moved there, who camped there for years. Can you imagine people that have come from miles? How disappointed! Every time somebody was healed, it added to that disappointment. I don't serve a God who creates a mad scene like that.

I can't serve a God like that. Now, you said what David says right there in the Bible. An angel went down a certain season in the pool and troubled the water.

He said there was first in trouble in the water and was made whole whatsoever disease he had. John, I really believe this, quoted it just as the Jews believed it because then he opens up how Jesus Christ Himself is the source of all the power. You and I know that too.

Well, follow me because I'm going someplace with this in just a moment. I wait for the Lord. My soul waits for the Lord more than David watched for the morning.

David also said, truly my soul waits on God. From Him comes our help. He only is my rock and my salvation.

He only is my defense. I'll not be moved. My soul waits out only upon God for my expectation is from Him.

He only is my rock and my salvation. He's my defense. I'll not be moved.

Listen, if you're waiting for help from some psychologist, some psychiatrist, or some preacher, you're going to be disappointed. You're waiting by the pool. Always waiting for somebody to bring an answer.

It will not come from any other source than from waiting on Jesus. None at all. Now, Jesus seemed to be drawn to a certain infinite man there.

A man who'd been there 38 years. See it there in verse 5 and 6? A certain man was there. Had an infirmity 38 years.

When Jesus saw him lie, knew that he'd been a long time in that case, He sent that to him without being made whole. Look at me for just a moment. This unnamed man, 38 years crippled, has many faces.

He represents a whole class of people. He represents some of us here this morning. Because Scripture says, all this is given for our benefit.

The Lord never just told a story for the sake of telling a story. It always had an application to people of all generations. And especially to ours.

Do you see this man laying there for 38 years, absolutely impotent? Jesus seems to have been drawn to this man. Perhaps because he was there the longest. Jesus was drawn to this man.

He's always drawn to the greatest need. I believe that. I see it in the streets of New York.

He's drawn to the greatest need all the time. And he knew what was in the mind. Because the Scripture said, Neither is there any creatures that not manifest in his sight.

For all things are naked and open under the eyes of him with whom we have to do. All things are open to him. That means that what you're thinking right now is open to the Lord.

How you're responding to what you're hearing right now is open to the Lord. All things are open to him. He is reading every thought that you're thinking this very moment.

I don't know. He may have been the weakest man in the place. And Jesus was drawn to that weakness.

But you know, 38 years of drast hopes, unbearable suffering and loneliness, they had to take a toll on this man. In fact, I believe in my heart that he finally gave up. I don't think he was even trying anymore.

Because you see, impotency comes in many forms. Many, many forms. It can be physical, it can be spiritual, it can be mental, or it can be all three at one time.

Today, right now, listening to me, you may be mentally or spiritually at the place this man was. Impotent. You may be at a place right now where you're absolutely drained.

Maybe at the point of not even trying anymore. Because you see, when you're in a situation that seems hopeless, no way out, I'm sure this man had come to a place where he said, nobody really understands the depth of my sufferings. No one really cares enough to stop and help.

There's not a single friend, there's not a single loved one that I know with enough time, love, or energy to really touch something in me that's hurting. He had no one. I think of a prostitute down on the east side, just walking the street, and this is late at night, and she's holding a bag lady.

They're on a park bench. And she's holding a bag lady. This bag lady was sick evidently, was crying.

This prostitute, so hard looking and hurting herself, her tears in her eyes, she was just patting her on the head and said, Honey, it's okay, we're going to make it. That prostitute was reaching out for love. Anywhere she could find it.

And this bag lady, no one cared. I told the other day of the bag lady they found dead. The true story, they found her dead.

The police officer found her in the snow. One of the bags, they found a Bible. Signed by her husband and two boys had been killed in a car crash.

Left her. They'd come from England. She had nobody.

Wound up as a bag lady, reaching for love in any direction. But you take a good look at that impotent man, and you think of all the years of struggle and the hurts that were heaped on him by uncaring and sensitive people. Can you imagine people walking all over him trying to get to that pool? They see him withered.

He just reached for anybody. Anybody. Help.

I can't do it by myself. And they're just walking away. Till finally he just becomes a part of the scene.

He blends in. There are many people like that that just seem to blend in and you don't even see them. It's possible to walk the streets and see people who leave and they just blend into the scene.

One thing I don't want God ever letting me do in New York is to get hard. I see people in New York, they're hard. They have insensitized themselves.

They don't reach out to the human. Now, you can't bleed all over the street. There comes a time when you have to say, look, you know, I can help you.

A woman comes, she says, look, I need five dollars. I said, no, honey, are you hungry? Come in with me and I'll buy you a hamburger. And you have to use wisdom.

But I don't want to get hard. But this crowd was insensitive. They're rushing by to get their own needs met.

Christian, that's where the church has sinned the greatest in the sight of God. Rushing around to get their own needs met. And not looking around for the needs of others.

We're all guilty of that. While there are multitudes of Christians, maybe some here this morning, you're spiritually helpless and impotent because maybe you have a lingering bond with a lust or a sin. And you hate it.

Some be setting sin that's robbed you of your life in vitality in your name. Helpless on what I'd call a bed of despair or depression that's set in on you. Depressed.

Hey, listen. There's probably no illness in the world worse than depression. Now, I've got to admit to you that I really don't know what that's about.

The Lord's been good to me and somehow has kept me from depression. I've only known maybe a week or so or a few days at a time where I was depressed. But I tell you, those few days I experienced, it was like hell.

I can imagine what it's like for somebody that has it lingering. And they can't put a finger on it. What causes it? That has probably got to be worse than any other sickness or illness, a physical illness.

To feel low, to feel down, to feel worthless, to feel wasted. And waiting for somebody to stir things up and make something happen. Do you know there's some people that spend their whole lifetime waiting for some miracle? Just waiting for that one instant all-cure miracle.

Somebody, somewhere is going to solve their problem. And it never comes. Folks, it will never come that way.

So, you know what these do? God bless their hearts, they drag themselves, listen, they drag themselves like this impotent man, they drag themselves from revival meeting to convention, to seminar, to counselor after counselor. They drag themselves out saying, help, help. They tell and retell their story of pain.

You know, I've sat down with some people and I know they've told their story so long that you don't dare interrupt them unless they miss a point. And if they miss it, they go back and find it, oh yeah, I forgot to tell you. And then, you know, they've told it so long, they could write a book.

Most of them would like to. And I'm not making fun of it, I'm just saying, let me show you where that leads to. Jesus goes up to this impotent man.

He asked him one of the most obvious questions you could ask a suffering man. You know what he asked? And I looked at this and I looked at it and then God began to open it. He goes up to this sick man and he said, will thou be made whole? Now wouldn't every sick man for 38 years want to be made whole? Wouldn't you think that that's too obvious a question? But you know what Jesus was saying? Jesus was reading his mind.

Do you really want to be healed? Do you really want to be healed? Wouldn't you think, oh yes, Master, I've been here 38 years, yes! Well, he didn't even know him as Master, but yes, sir, I want to be healed. That should have been his immediate response. But it wasn't.

Certainly the Lord had a reason for asking such a penetrating, hard question. See, Jesus was inferring that he really didn't want to be healed. Now think of this for just a minute.

He's inferring that he did not want to be healed. Now see, there's a danger in pain and agony and suffering. There's a real danger.

And I'll tell you what it is. It's to finally give up and embrace it. The Puritans called it hugging the pain.

Hugging the pain. Now listen to me. You can suffer and suffer for so long until finally you embrace it.

And it becomes a way of life and you build your whole life around the suffering. You build your life around the pain. And finally, well listen to me.

There's no more desire to get out of it because it becomes a crutch. It becomes a way of receiving love and attention. I found a teenage boy 11 years ago in Brooklyn.

17 years old living in a dirty rat infested basement. A pile of rags. He was sleeping on a pile of rags.

He had a picture of his mother scotch taped on the wall and he had a candle full of hepatitis. I had a young man with me and we picked him up and took him to the center and cleaned him up, gave him a clean bed, preached Jesus to him and loved him. My heart went out to that boy.

He stayed two weeks. Came home one day from a meeting. I had to go out for a meeting and come home.

He was gone. So I went back and I found him down in the basement again. And he said, Brother Dave, please leave me alone.

He said, to you this is just a hole. It's just a piece of dirt. But to me it's my home.

And I'm cozy down here. I'm comfortable and I don't want to leave it. He'd grown accustomed to his pain.

He died six months later. Hepatitis and jaundice. He had jaundice from needles.

He was hooked on heroin. I found a boy in Greenwich Village one day sleeping on a rooftop. He wasn't more than 18.

I said, well look, why don't you come? He knew about Teen Challenge. I said, why don't you come? I'll take you right now. We'll go down to Teen Challenge.

He said, I don't want to do that. I said, why? I said, you sleep out there in the rain and everything else. He said, yeah, I get some cardboard.

He said, to tell you the truth, I like it now. I remember a bag lady in one of the parks. She was black.

She weighed about 300 pounds. Overweight, sick. In fact, her legs were so swollen she couldn't walk hardly.

She had about three bags. They sleep with these bags tied on their feet so that if somebody tries to take them while they're sleeping, they feel the tug and they'll wake up and they'll hit you with an umbrella or something. Not because they're angry, because that's their life.

That's their whole world in those bags. I sat down in the grass and talked to her for about half an hour. Most of these, they're mothers with children.

They don't want to go to a retirement home. They don't want to go to a rest home. They don't want to be put in some institution.

Others have no family. I said, why don't you let me call the welfare department and get you a room? She said, I've had a room. They put me in a room.

And they had a cot. She said, I slept on the floor because I couldn't sleep on a bed anymore. I've slept on park benches for 12 years.

And she said, I was miserable. She said, thanks, but no thanks. I believe you care, but just leave me alone.

She's hugging her pain. She's embraced it. It's become a way of life.

You see, this is what I'm seeing in this whole thing. The Lord's question implied that he wasn't ready. Instead, that expectant, yes, I want to be healed.

He says, sir, I have no man. I call this situation the no one, someone syndrome. The no one, someone syndrome.

I have nobody to help, and it's somebody else's fault. You ever heard that? Always blaming it on somebody else. All the emotional, spiritual, physical pain, I have no one to really understand.

I have no one to touch it. And always someone else is the cause. The brain.

You see, I believe this man had bitterness building up in his heart. In fact, when he said, I have no one, it's true. And even though it's true, even though it may be that someone has hurt you, even though it may be that no one can touch you, it may be true, it's only adding to his burden.

It's not helping him at all. Now, he's deteriorating mentally as well as physically. His mind is full of bitterness.

It's so sad, but it's real true, that many hurting people couldn't survive without their sorrow and pain. Listen to me. Did you hear me? Let me say it again.

Some Christians, some of you here even, you couldn't survive. Because if God really healed you, you wouldn't have anything to talk about. You'd have to learn a whole new language.

Because you were so complained, you were so murmured for so many years, it's become a way of life. I know professional murmurers. They are professors, they're pros.

They have so complained, they're so murmured about everything, nothing is right, that if God healed them, they'd have to learn how to encourage other people, they'd have to learn a whole new language of hope. They're not ready to do that, because it's not even in their vocabulary. Is that making some sense to some? Would anybody like that? Oh.

There's a responsibility that goes with healing. And Jesus was asking this man, are you ready to take the responsibility that goes with being healed? Get all this new child. I believe God's going to heal.

God's able to heal. But you know there's a great responsibility that goes with that healing. There's a responsibility of testifying to the glory of the Lord.

Now these folks are not complaining, they're not murmurers. But you know there's a whole responsibility that goes with that. There's a responsibility that says when the word of God comes to me, when the word of hope comes to me, I've got to take an action, I've got to move, I've got to act upon it.

When God brings me a word of hope, I can't just sit still. I can't just sit still. Alright, listen to me now.

So no one cares. So no one really can touch you. So someone else is responsible.

Alright, so you go through more hard times than others. And you've got more suffering, you've got more struggles than others around you. Has it ever bothered you that some people seem to go right through life without any problems and you have to struggle and struggle and struggle? All kinds of pain and suffering.

You see people and they look so happy and you say, well don't they ever suffer? I look at some of the rich people around. I mean they don't seem to suffer at all, but don't look at that phony smile. That's a facade.

There's hurt behind all of that. Don't judge people by just what you see outwardly. But you see, those who don't turn to the Lord turn inward.

Suffering has the potential, listen close now, suffering has the potential of turning gentle, nice people, suffering has the potential, prolonged suffering has the tendency to turn people into grumbling, self-centered cripples who wallow in self-pity. And I'll tell you, it's miserable, I don't know what it's like, but I'm sure it's miserable to live with someone who's become an emotional cripple because they begin to measure your love by your willingness to cater to their weakness. They measure your love.

Did you hear what I say? You don't love me. If you loved me, you'd be more sympathetic. And after you've been sympathetic for five, ten years, and all the catering, finally, if you stop catering to that pain, if you stop catering to that weakness, they say, you don't love me anymore.

See, there's such a thing as tough love. And real love from God is a tough love. It makes you face truth.

Truth in the inner man. God says, the only way to make you whole and keep you from being an emotional cripple is to tell you the truth. That's why God has brought forth these messages from now on with Bob and Donna and those who have ministered this pulpit.

It's sometimes been a hard, strong message. But it's tough love because it's healing. You know, I preached the message a few weeks ago.

It sounded very, very hard. But it came from a broken heart. It really did because I knew that I loved everybody in this house.

I loved. I think my brother Don hit it on the point. I said, Don, I think I got angry.

He said, I think you did too. Got a little angry. You know what I'm angry at though? I'm angry at not people, but I'm angry at what I see the devil doing to them.

When they won't make that final surrender. I see the compromises and how it's going to affect children and family and so forth. And sometimes I guess the child gets right I want to do it in the flesh.

But you see, there comes a time when what you're going through has to end. Now that doesn't mean... Now there is There is a suffering affliction that comes to all of us. Many are afflictions of the righteous.

But the Lord, what? The Lord delivers them out of them all. Now that deliverance comes sometimes in the way of bearing up under it with the spirit of joy. When you become such a testimony of people and really it's a stronger testimony that you're still enduring the suffering but with such joy.

Do you know what it's like to go into a hospital room with somebody that's dying internally with cancer and you're encouraging everybody that comes in the room? And they've got a spirit of Jesus in the house? Stan, I'm sure you won't mind me telling it. This is when Ron, just before he died, he says, former

husband, I couldn't wait to get in his room and sit and talk to him. He came to the place and he said, David, don't pray for me.

My heart's with him already. And there was such a joy. Bless my heart.

Then when I came in the room there was such a joy and such an expectancy. He could have been a mormon. He could have been a complainer.

But there was no mormoning. There was no complaining. God hates mormoning.

God hates complaining. It breaks His heart. I know I hate it.

And I've done enough of it. But you know, I've seen with my dear wife, I've seen with Gwen some absolute miracle. After five operations for cancer and she's a living miracle.

And to see her, there were times when Jack Rice would come over and have him to give her pain medication because she was doubled up in pain. And I knew there were times he had to go out and wipe tears from his eyes because he hated to see what was happening. And there was time after time where Gwen could have just given in to that pain and become a cripple the rest of her life.

In her mind, she could have hidden behind some kind of medication. She could have hidden behind some kind of emotional pain. But there was something that would rise up in her.

She'd get the Bible out and there'd be a promise and she'd get a hold of that promise. And I'd come home thinking, oh no, she's going to be down again. And I thought, no! Lord, I can't take any more of it.

I'd come in and the Lord would have dealt with her with the Word. And she'd have such hope in her heart. When she was in the hospital with Lupus finally, and I was at the end of my rope, to come into that hospital one day, and God through a promise had given her a word of healing, and she was dressed saying, take me home, I'm healed.

And I'd say, listen to me. She could have become, she could have hugged her pain. She would not be sitting here this morning.

She would have given in to it. But she laid hold of the Word of God. And she heard it rise.

Be healed. And she took that by faith. She's grown sweeter, more loving, standing beside me.

And she was the one who heard the first call to New York ahead of me. Out of that sweetness. She's always been sweet, but you know how sweet she's become since this marvelous thing that she's gone through.

That test has made her all the sweeter. What would have happened when Jesus said, this man will not be made whole. Rise up and walk.

Take up your bedrock. What if He would have said, listen to me now, what if He would have said to Jesus, no Lord, I've been disappointed too many times already. Why would God want to bless me? I've been useless to Him.

I've been of no worth to anybody. Why would God suddenly choose to pick me out of all this hurting multitude and heal me? Thank you, sir, for caring enough to stop and speak to me, but I'm destined to die

in this condition. He said, look, I've been sitting here 38 years.

Why would God want to heal me? Why would God pick me out? I've wasted 38 years. I've been no good to anybody. I've got bitterness in me.

Why would God suddenly... Look at all the people around me. Why would God choose me now? What kind of God are you talking about? What would have happened to that man? Jesus couldn't have healed him. Jesus couldn't have helped him.

He'd have built a wall there that could not be penetrated. That's what so many may be thinking now. I've wasted time.

I've sinned. I've had lust. I've done things.

Why would Jesus suddenly come with a word of hope for me? But He does. And He's doing it right now. He's bringing a word of hope to you.

He's bringing a word from Heaven saying, rise and be healed. Take up your bed. Walk away from this condition.

Walk away from what you have. Walk away from your emotional, spiritual pain by faith. Now you say it's not that easy.

When you stand on the Word of God, the Holy Spirit comes in all the glory and God gives you the strength. Now this man was made whole because he took God at His Word. He believed what the Lord said.

Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up your bed and walk. Now, I want you to hear me out for just a moment. This man, Jesus is standing before a man who really doesn't know Him right now.

He's probably heard that there's a man going about the land healing the sick. Now up to this point, Jesus had only performed two miracles. I don't know if he'd heard too much about Him.

He had changed the water into wine, remember? And He'd healed the Jewish woman. He'd healed, I think it was his son. He'd only had two miracles to this point.

He'd been to the well of Sychar. That was a miracle. But he really didn't know Him.

He had no intuition about Him. He had no experience with Jesus. Really didn't know Him.

So he couldn't act on any knowledge of knowing Jesus. Really didn't know anything about healing power. Now, he probably heard about Him going into the temple because Jesus had just been to the temple too and cracked the whip, remember? And drove out the money chambers.

And I'm sure that everybody ran that pill because it had to be probably the biggest gossiping spot in Jerusalem. Because you get people sitting there for years they're going to gossip and you're going to hear everything there is. And they've probably heard of you.

You've got that teacher that came in a temple. He went crazy. The other night I felt what it was all alike.

When I had the Spirit of God come on me and have to go through a crowd yelling Ichabod. But I tell you what, he doesn't know Jesus this time. So Jesus is not healing him because he has something deep with

Christ.

He knows nothing of doctrine. Does he? Certainly this man really doesn't know. But Jesus knew all about him.

Mercy was about to spring forth. Hallelujah! You know Jesus didn't cross examine him. He didn't rebuke him for his bitterness.

He didn't even rebuke him for his self-pity. Jesus was really touched with the feelings of that poor man's infirmity. Jesus didn't even make a moral demand on him.

He didn't say, Are you going to walk with me? Are you going to make me enough promises right now? If you'll promise me that you'll never do this again, I'll heal you. He made no moral demands on him at this point. There's a time for that.

Later, after he's healed, he's going to meet Jesus in the temple and know who he is. Jesus is going to place a moral demand on him then. Go and sin no more, lest the worst thing come upon you.

And Jesus said, If you obey me, you'll know the doctrine. He said, You'll understand. The doctrine will come.

You may be sitting here this morning saying, I don't have any deep knowledge of Jesus. I don't know the doctrine of holiness. I don't know the doctrine of walking with God.

I don't know the doctrines anymore. I just feel dead and dull. But Jesus said, If you'll act on my word, I'll send you a word of healing.

If you'll act on it, rise up. I'll teach you. I'll show you.

I'll reveal it to you. Well, you know, this reveals the heart of Jesus like nothing I've seen in the Bible. How it reveals his heart.

He said, If you obey me, you'll know the doctrine. I think people who obey the Lord with all their heart and walk in holiness, you don't even have to have some teacher teaching you finely in walking in obedience. The Lord will begin to reveal it to you.

The spirit of revelation comes upon you. You'll know the doctrine. You may not be able to write a book about it, but you'll know it in a practical way.

But you see, a word of resurrection power came to this man. Jesus looks him right in the eye. And this man faces the greatest decision of his life.

Now, I'm not going to try to set this up emotionally. I'm not screaming at anybody today. Most of all, because I don't have the strength.

And I don't want it to be something psychological. I want it to be of the Holy Spirit. So listen to me closely.

Some of you are going to face the biggest decision of your life this morning. Right here, now. Because God's going to send you, and He's doing it right now.

He's sending you a word of resurrection life to change you. If you're backslidden, to bring you back. If you're going through emotional pain, to heal you.

He's sending a word to you, and when you hear it, out of His heart of love and compassion and mercy, when you hear it, you've got to act on it. Or that time will pass by. I can't tell you that there'll be another chance, I don't know.

But I can tell you there'll be a better chance because the Lord's present. When He's present, He brings you that word of resurrection. He's going to say to you, I love you.

I know your pain. And just as sure as Jesus stood before this man and said, rise up and walk, that same Master is in this house right now, and through my lips is saying to you right now, and hear it, rise now and be healed. Rise and be healed.

Come back. Be changed. The Lord says, I love you.

I'm trying to reach your heart. This man, acting on no intuition, acting on no background with Jesus, acting no moral demand or anything, simply on the word of resurrection, lies and guilt, that man, without a question, started sitting up. And can you imagine the people around him looking at this man who'd been there for 38 years, and nobody's thinking about that pill now because the crowds come running around because that man is shaking his hands.

They were livid and he's shaking his hands. And somebody reaches to help him up more and says, leave him alone. Leave him alone.

No man's helping him now. It's just the word. The word.

No counselor. No books. No tapes.

No records. Just the word of the Holy Spirit says, rise. Something wells up in him, like I feel something welling up in some of you right now by the Holy Spirit.

He loves me. This is God. God speaking.

There's power. And he gets up on his feet. Can you imagine 38 years he's never stood? Can you imagine the joy in his heart? Can you imagine the sense? Oh, what a relief! I've seen that in people who come back to the Lord.

I've seen that in people who've gone through pain and the deliverance comes. What a joy! Don't tell me he didn't dance. Don't tell me he didn't hug Jesus.

Don't tell me he wasn't weeping with joy. Don't tell me he didn't run around saying, I forgot to pull! In fact, Jesus probably was going to be mobbed because he escaped. Jesus, you know, he got out of there shortly after, you'll find it out.

And of course, the whole Jewish hierarchy got mad because he did it on Sunday. He did it on the Sabbath. They weren't concerned about the man being healed, but he broke the law.

Those Jews are the most immoral, godless bunch I've ever read about. I mean, those priests were godless. Money mad.

It's where the whole church hierarchy is going today. You know, they said, Why did you do that on the Sabbath? And Jesus said, My Father worketh unto hitherto, and I work. You know what Jesus is saying? I don't do anything except my Father tells me.

My Father wanted to heal him, so I healed him. My Father wanted to heal him, so I healed him. My Father saw something in him, so I came to him.

And I said, Why is that? Because that's what God wanted. And brother, sister, that's what God wants for you today. And that's why Jesus by His Spirit is present, because God wants you healed.

God doesn't want you to go on in your pain. God doesn't want you to go in depression and fear and bondage. He wants you to enjoy His presence.

He wants you to have the glory and the peace and the joy. Listen, I wouldn't want to live a single day without the sense of His presence, the sense of His forgiveness, the sense of His love. If you lose that, what do you have left? Do you have anything left? The sense of His presence.

Where do you go? You can talk to people for five hours, you can talk to people for five days, and leave just as empty as you started. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing Himself for what He sees the Father do. For what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son.

For the Father loves the Son, shows Him all things that Himself doeth. He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. Hallelujah.

Now I'm going to close in just a minute, but I believe, listen closely, I believe that Jesus was really there. I've been trying to analyze this and pray about it. Jesus, why of all people did you go to Him? You know why I believe it was? There was a cry in His heart.

Not just any cry, but a cry of need, a cry of humility, a cry of hunger. There was some kind of a cry that touched the heart of God, because you see Jesus said, I will do what the Father said, so the Father heard the cry and sent the Son. I believe Jesus came to that man because He was responding probably the deepest heart cry in that place.

In my distress, David said, I called upon the Lord and I cried unto my God and He heard the voice out of His temple. My cry came before Him even unto His ears. Listen to Psalms 106.

Many times did He deliver them, but they provoked Him with their counsel and they were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless, He regarded their affliction when He heard their cry. He said, these people sinned, these people turned on Me, they wasted time, but He said in their affliction they cried to Me and I heard them and I healed them.

Fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, they're afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of meat. That's the Word of God.

You finally come to a place where you don't even want to hear the Word of God. You don't want to hear anybody preach. They abhor the meat and they draw near to the gates of death.

That, I believe, is depression. Despair. But they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He saves them out of all their distresses.

He sends His Word and He heals them and He delivers them from destruction. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, for His wonderful works to the children of men. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. How can you but worship a God like that? Who says that even when you abhorred My Word, you turned your back on Me, did all these things, yet one day I sent a Word to you and said I love you and I want to heal you. I'm going to close with what I believe is probably the greatest example of God's mercy in all the Bible.

It's in the Old Testament. And I want you to turn there with me so that you can get the picture. If you will, please.

2 Kings 21. I'm going to close right after this. 2 Kings 21.

We're going to talk about the most wicked king of Israel. Hey folks, here's a man that outside the grace of God I can't forgive. I tell you.

I read about what this man did and I get angry. Let me show you something about God's heart. 2 Kings 21.

Let's start with verse 2. Verse 1 says Manasseh. So we establish he was 12 years old when it began to rain. It rained 50 and 5 years in Jerusalem.

He wasn't like that when he was 12 years old. But folks, when he got able to take over the rains away from his counselors, and he took full rain. Look at verse 2. He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord after the abomination of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.

He built up again the high places which Hezekiah's father destroyed. He raised up altars to baal and made a grove as did Ahab king of Israel. He worshiped all the hosts of heaven and served them.

He built altars in the house of the Lord of which the Lord said in Jerusalem will I put my name, will build altars for all the hosts of heaven. Look at verse 6. He made his son pass through the fire. Do you know what he did? He sacrificed him in the altar.

He took him to this belly god, iron furnished, laid him there, and burned him up. He actually sacrificed. It was a child sacrifice.

Can you imagine a king sacrificing his son? He observed times, used enchantments, dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. He wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord to prevent him to anger. Look on down at verse 9. They hearkened not, and Manasseh, what did he do? He seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.

He said all the Canaanites, all the Philistines, and all the seductions, this king seduced my people more than all of them combined. You see why they don't like it? Look at verse 10. The Lord spoke by a servant of the prophet, saying because Manasseh, king of Judah, done these abominations, done wickedly, above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, will make Judah to sin.

Therefore says the Lord God of Israel, I'm going to bring evil, much evil upon Jerusalem, Judah. And whosoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle. I'll scratch over Jerusalem, the line of Samaria, the plummet of the house of Ab.

I'll wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. Look at verse 16. Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.

Beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, and doing that which is evil in the sight of God. He filled the city with blood. He's a murderer.

Godless. Bloody. Hating.

Abominable. Let me show you the other side of it. 2 Chronicles 33.

Go to the right. Last verse. Last reference now.

Chapter 33. Verse 9. I'll wait until the rustling of the leaves stops here. I want you to see the mercy now.

Hey, look at me before you look at that. Now be honest with me. No joking.

Be honest with me now. After what you just read, would you forgive it? What if he'd killed your mother? That blood that filled Israel. What if he'd killed your children? Killed somebody's mother.

He killed somebody's children, didn't he? Yes, they were God's children. I'm talking on a human level now. I find it difficult to forgive this man.

I'm enraged at what I hear of this man. A man who did more harm to seduce Israel than any other king. A man who filled the city with blood.

Of course he's going to pay for his sin, isn't he? Look at verse 9. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err and to do worse than the heathen. Do worse than the heathen. How can you do worse than the heathen? I don't know what that means.

Whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people that they would not hearken. Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captain and the host of the king of Assyria which took Manasseh among the thorns and bound him with fetters and carried him to Babylon.

Look, that's where you end up. You wind up in chains with the thorns. That's the pricking of your conscience.

That's the memory of all the things that you were or could have been. And look what happens. Verse 12.

And when he was in affliction, what did he do? He sought the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers and prayed unto Him and he was entreated of Him and God heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem into His kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God. Did God forgive him? Why, he humbled himself.

He shocked the Lord with all of his heart. He humbled himself. He said, God, I've sinned.

I have sinned against You. And he humbled himself and God forgave this man. But you know what he had to do? He had to go back and make things right.

We talk about these television evangelists. Do you know how you can judge repentance? By those who did the wrong or built the idols to go back and tear them all down. To turn against what they built and said

that was wrong.

And this man goes back. Look at verse 14. After this he built a wall within the city of David.

Look at verse 15. And he took away the strange gods and the idol out of the house of the Lord and all the idols that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem and cast them out of the city. He went into the temple, cleaned it out.

Every dirty thing he had done he made it right. The best he knew how. Alright.

Look at verse 18. Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh and his prayer unto his God and the words of the seers or prophets that speak to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, Behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel his prayer also and how God was intrigued of him and all of his sins and his trespass and the places where he built hot places and set up graves and graven images before he was what? Before he was humbled. Behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers.

And one of the great things it says, they buried him in his own house. That meant with honor. He was buried with honor.

Look at me. Hallelujah. Is there anything too hard for our Lord? Is there anyone too far gone? The only thing I can see in the Bible of anyone too far gone are those who have so hardened themselves to reproof a rejection of reproof that they themselves have cut him out.

Those who have sinned against the Holy Spirit. And those who have sinned against the Holy Spirit, you can know that right now this morning. If you can sit here in your heart and say, I really believe with all that's in me that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and that He can heal me, that He'll forgive me, the Spirit of the Lord is moving in on you.

You say, I feel numb, I feel dead. That's not the point. Above the numbness, beyond all that, in the deepest recesses of your heart, do you hear Jesus saying to you, rise, take up your bed.

You've been laying down here long enough. Take your bed now. Get up.

And walk away. I believe the Lord wants to heal this morning. Not going to make it some great... It doesn't have to be a weepy time.

Has to be an honest time. I wasn't going to preach this. And this has nothing to do with anybody I knew who'd be here either.

Not at all. Before God I can say that. Because I was originally going to preach a prophetic message called, We're Not Ready.

I may get to preach this some other time. The Lord just really put this in my heart that this morning, in this particular service, He wanted to heal physically, spiritually, and emotionally. He wants to heal your pain.

He wants to heal your suffering mind and heart. He wants to forgive and heal. And He can do that right now.

Now you're among a body of people who love. If you stand and ask for prayer, no one here will do anything but love you and reach out to you. They'll not question you.

Any more than Jesus questioned this man. They're not going to judge you or anything else. They're saying, We're with you.

I want everybody in this building, I want to pray first, and then I'm going to invite you to stand for prayer if you need healing. Spiritually, physically, mentally, in any way. When I say mentally, I'm talking about depression, despair, fear.

I'm talking about those things that hold you down and drag you down. Can you believe the Lord is present? Oh, He's here. In a wonderful way.

Lord Jesus, we sense Your mercy, Your beautiful grace and love. How you reach out now, Lord, to hearts. Lord Manasseh responded because he was in trouble.

But Lord, even when we're in trouble, it doesn't matter how, some people respond in good times, some people respond in bad times. That's not the point. The point is that we do respond.

That we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit saying, Rise. Rise. Take up your bed.

You've been down long enough. You've been crushed long enough. Let me encourage you.

Let me lift you up. Let me hold you now. God, in Jesus' name, bring forth the spirit of loving conviction that those that are here would say, I want to be healed.

I do want to be healed. That's the question. Do you really want to be healed? Do you want to change? And if you want it, it's yours today.

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