

(God Can Solve Every Problem - 3) Lame Man Healed

by Zac Poonen

God's laws and promises can be experienced by understanding and applying the spiritual truths found in the Bible.

Duration: 54:27

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:10

Topics: "Biblical Study", "Gods Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing and studying God's word. He explains that the word of God is like food for our spirit and that it is necessary for spiritual strength. The speaker encourages the audience to invest in a concordance, a tool that helps locate specific words in the Bible, to aid in their study. He also highlights the power of God's grace behind every commandment and encourages believers to believe in that grace. Lastly, the speaker discusses the importance of understanding God's laws and promises in order to experience His solutions to our problems.

Transcript

Good morning. On the theme, God can solve every problem. It's absolutely true.

And that shouldn't surprise us because He runs the universe. Things on earth are no problem for Him. But there are laws according to which God operates.

And we can miss what God has for us if we don't understand those laws. Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. So I presume from that statement that if you don't know the truth, you'll remain in bondage.

Or if you know only partial truth, you'll remain in partial bondage. You'll be partially free. God's promises can be experienced only as we believe them.

And God can solve our problems if we understand His laws. That's why it's so important to proclaim God's word. That's why it's so important to study God's word, to understand God's ways.

Many people, all of us who are here, and most of us anyway, we could say, how did you know Jesus is your savior? It's because you heard the truth and you responded in faith. Now if you had not heard the

truth, like many people in the world today, or like many who have heard the truth, you did not respond in faith, you would not be saved. It's because you understood the truth and you understood God's law that you were saved.

It's the same with the solution to many of our problems. So I've been looking at the miracles in the gospel of John. John's gospel has got eight miracles mentioned in them.

Now John saw many, many miracles, but he speaks of only eight of them that he picked out of all the hundreds of miracles he saw Jesus performing in his life. And he called these miracles signs. I want to show you that first of all in John 2 verse 11.

This beginning of signs. The word miracle is never found in John's gospel. He calls them signs, inspired by the Holy Spirit, indicating that every miracle had a spiritual meaning that he wanted us to understand.

And he picked out eight, or the Holy Spirit picked out eight, because there are some special truths in these eight miracles that they were specially called signs. And that's why it's good for us to study them carefully, because there are truths here that have practical application to our daily life. So we look first of all at the first miracle of Jesus of turning the water into wine in John chapter 2. And then in the second session we look at the second miracle mentioned in John's gospel, the second sign in John 4 verse 46.

Onwards over the royal official's son being healed. One of the number of examples in scripture where one person's faith benefited another. As far as we know that son didn't have faith, but the father had faith and the son got blessed.

There are examples like that in scripture and that have happened subsequently in these 20 centuries. We want to look at the third sign and that's in John's gospel chapter 5. John's gospel chapter 5. And here it is the story of the lame man being healed at the pool of Bethesda. And we need to see what the spiritual application of this is for our life.

Here is the story, let me first explain it in a nutshell. A man who had been lame for 38 years. He wasn't born lame, he became lame.

And we are told in verse 14 that he became lame due to sin. So sometime in his life, maybe he was 20 years old or he lived in sin for sometime. And finally as a result of that he got punished by God, he became lame.

Sin often leads to some type of sickness. Not every sickness is due to sin, but sin does very often lead to sickness as well. We learn that from this parable.

And then for 38 years he had been at this pool and lying there hopeless. He had life, but he couldn't walk and therefore he was of no use to society. And that's the picture of people, spiritually speaking, who are born again.

Yes, they are born again, they have got life, they are not dead, they are not like people in the grave. Death is also, death is a picture of an unsaved person. But here is a person who has got life, but he is not able to walk.

Now the New Testament speaks a lot about walking. If you take a concordance and look up the word walk, you will find some interesting references, particularly in the epistles. It says we got to walk in the spirit.

It says in 1 John 2.6 we got to walk as Jesus walked. And other verses like that, walk in the light, as God is in the light. So walking speaks of a life of fellowship with God, of victory over sin, overcoming sinful habits and not constantly falling.

Falling, falling, you know a little baby can't walk. It tries to walk and it falls down. That's how we are in the beginning.

When we are born again, we are like little babies, we don't know how to walk. The day you are converted, you don't get victory over sin. You got life, you come out of the womb, you are born again, Christ has come into your heart, your sins are forgiven, your past is dealt with, you are on your way to heaven, but you still get defeated by the same sins you were defeated by before.

And that is our experience, the experience of every believer in the beginning of their life, exactly like a baby unable to walk. But we know that we'd be seriously concerned if that baby is two years old and still can't walk. And we need to be seriously concerned if we've been believers for two years and we're still constantly defeated.

I don't mean an occasional fall, that can happen to any of us. I can trip going down these steps and fall. So can you today.

But that's not because we haven't learned to walk, that's accidental. And there's a difference between those accidental falls that can happen to the most mature saint in the world and the fall of a baby who hasn't learned to walk yet. So, when we talk about victory over sin or walking in the light or walking as Jesus walked, we're not talking about that type of perfection that we'll have only in heaven where we'll never fall at all.

That's impossible on this earth. As long as we live on this earth, we will fall anytime. That's why there's provision through the blood of Jesus for cleansing us from sin.

But, it is God's will that we live in victory. That we walk in the Holy Spirit and not be lame. Because this lame man, he needed help from others for himself.

Leave alone helping other people. And a lot of Christians are like that. They're born again, not only they're not a blessing to other people, but they constantly need so much counseling and help themselves.

Now, if you find yourself in a situation where you're always needing someone to come and comfort you and encourage you and pat you on the back and you come to church worship services just to hear something that will encourage you and you're not able to help anybody else, this probably refers to you. Now, let's read what it says here. John chapter 5, verse 1 and 2. First of all, it says here that in verse 2, there was a pool in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is a place where the center of God's worship on the face of the earth in those days. It was the only place where there was a temple. And that was a place where, in the Old Testament, God dwelt when he was happy with his people.

In Jerusalem, by the sheep gate, a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes, and in these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered. Now, as I've traveled around many churches, I see that is a picture of many churches. We can say exactly like it says in verse 3, in those churches sit every Sunday morning a multitude of people who are spiritually sick, blind, lame, and

withered.

And it is for such people who are not healthy, who are not whole, who are not strong, who are not able to use their strength to help other people, to bless other people, who need someone to carry them around because they are blind, who need someone to lift them from place to place because they are lame, who constantly need a pep talk to keep them going till next week. It's not God's will that we should be like that forever. And yet there is a multitude of such people all over the world among born again Christians.

Because they are not filled with the Holy Spirit. In another translation it says a multitude of impotent people, that means people who don't have power. Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power.

And here were a multitude of people without power. They had life, but they had no power. God has made provision for us, not only through the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse our sin and give us life, but also he has given us this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit to fill us, to give us power.

I want to encourage you to believe that. And when you hear that message, don't immediately get turned off from that, because you have seen the fanaticism of some people who claim to be filled with the Spirit. Or the love of money that you have seen in some pastors who talk about being filled with the Spirit.

Now I am not talking about that type of counterfeit. I am talking about the real thing. And whenever you see a counterfeit, remember there is something real.

Nobody makes counterfeit brown paper. They make counterfeit dollars and counterfeit gold and counterfeit diamonds. So if you see a counterfeit somewhere, you can be pretty sure that the real thing must be valuable.

If you see counterfeit gifts of the Spirit, oh, be absolutely sure there is a genuine thing somewhere and it is pretty valuable. You don't get turned off from something because you have seen the counterfeit. And if I were the devil, I would make plenty of counterfeits of the thing that was valuable.

I would make counterfeit born again people, counterfeit spirit filled people, counterfeit everything. Because that is the way to turn believers away from the real thing. And get them taken up with unimportant issues.

The most important thing for any believer, if you are born again, the very next thing that you need is to be filled with the Holy Spirit in a genuine way. Perhaps not in this counterfeit way, definitely not in that way, but in the same way the apostles were filled on the day of Pentecost. That is the thing that delivers us from blindness, sickness, lameness and being withered spiritually.

The things that are mentioned here. Now it says here that Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the time of a feast. And when the Jews had a feast, they had a great time of celebration.

And it is very interesting to see when all this celebration was going on in Jerusalem, that Jesus, he went among these poor sick people in Bethesda, because he wanted to look for some opportunity to help one of those poor people. That is a wonderful example for us to follow. Christianity is not all just celebration and feast.

That is part of it, certainly, we are not against it. But in the midst of it all, to look for opportunities in some Bethesda somewhere, where there are people who are in need, who need your help. There is a lovely

verse in the book of Nehemiah, chapter 8 and verse 10.

Part of it we all know and we sing it in our songs. The joy of the Lord is your strength. But there is another part of that verse, which is not so well known among Christians.

It says, eat the fat and drink, and then when you have done that, send portions to those for whom nothing has been prepared, for those who don't have what you have. That is true Christianity. Joy of the Lord is your strength, eat the fat, drink, and then think of those who don't have what you have.

Very few people think of that after they have eaten and drunk. But Jesus' mind was always like that. You go to Jerusalem and see all these people celebrating the feast and you think, perhaps there are some people who couldn't come here.

Perhaps there are people who couldn't come here because they were lame or blind. Let me look for them. His heart was always like that.

He enjoyed the celebrations, I am sure, but then he also thought of that. And that is how a true Christian lives in the world. And so he went to Bethesda.

We read in Psalm 41, it is a very lovely passage, which says, I want to read this to you, How blessed is the man, think of this, How blessed is the man who considers the poor. The Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble. You know, all these blessings listed in Psalm 41 are for people who think about those who are poorer than them and who have a thought and a consideration for them.

Who don't selfishly think only about all the wonderful things God has given me. The Lord will deliver him in a time of trouble. The Lord will protect him.

The Lord will keep him alive. He will be called blessed on the earth. The Lord will not give him over to the desire of his enemies.

The Lord will sustain him when he is sick. And when he is ill, the Lord will restore him to health. What a lot of things the Lord does for those who just consider the poor.

That is here on earth. And then in the final day when we stand before him, the Lord will say, come you blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom because when I was sick, you visited me. You didn't heal me, you didn't have the power for that, but you visited me.

When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was in prison, you couldn't come and set me free, but you came and encouraged me there.

And the righteous will say, Lord, when was that? We never saw you sick or hungry. He says, when you did it to the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me. There is something we can learn from that example of Jesus, who when everybody was celebrating, thought about the poor, helpless people who could not join in those celebrations.

And that is a way of thinking that we need to develop and live in all the time. That is the way of living a happy and a useful Christian life on earth. So that is one thing we can learn from there.

And we read here that when in this pool of Bethesda, all these people were waiting, verse 3, the last part of verse 3, for the moving of the waters, for an angel went down at certain seasons into the pool and

stirred up the water. And whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease in which he was afflicted. Everybody did not get healed.

It was the first person who managed to jump in who got healed. And this is one of those small mercies that God provided for a rebellious nation. The Jews were a rebellious people.

We read much about that in the history of Israel in the Old Testament. But even when they were rebellious, God showed some mercies to them. And one of these mercies was this angel going down and stirring this pool.

And one person, whoever jumped in first, would be healed. Not everyone, but the first person. I think this reminds me of hospitals and doctors in a world full of sin, full of rebellious people who have no interest in God.

The world is full of such people. God has still provided medicines and hospitals and doctors, small mercies for those who are sick because He is compassionate. And it says here in verse 5, a certain man was there who had been 38 years in his sickness.

Now, I want to do a little Bible study here. It's good to know the Scriptures, you know. I'll tell you something, the reason for that.

The reason I, in my preaching, the reason why I stick to Scripture so much is because, like Paul said, I don't want your faith to rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, in the Word of God. Faith doesn't come by listening to stories. Faith comes by the Word of God, it says.

Faith comes by hearing, Romans 10, 17, and hearing by the Word of God. Stories will only excite you, stimulate you, make you laugh. But God's Word will produce faith.

And that is what we need more than anything else in our life on this earth. And if we don't get into the Scriptures, if you neglect the Scriptures, you'll never get faith. If you're not serious about reading the Bible, I'd say forget about having faith, forget about experiencing 99% of what God has for you.

That's the truth. I'm sorry to see so many people around the world, everywhere I go, it's the same in India, where people are not serious about studying the Scriptures. And what a lot they're missing.

What a lot they're missing. They'll discover it when they stand before the Lord. Maybe they'll get into heaven, because their sins are forgiven.

But they'll have such a lot of regret when they see the Lord and get into heaven, and discover how useless their earthly life was, how much they complained and grumbled and lived in bad moods and anger, and so many things they could have overcome, if they'd only read God's Word and had faith. My dear brothers and sisters, you don't need stories to tickle your ears. You need to know God's Word.

And the more you get to know God's Word, the stronger you'll be. There's a lovely verse in 1 John 2 which says, the Word of God remains in you, and you have overcome Satan, the evil one. The reason many Christians cannot overcome the evil one in their daily life is because the Word of God is not dwelling in them.

How do you expect a person to be strong who doesn't eat food? God's Word is meant to be food for our spirit. So here's a little Bible study. 38 years.

Many of you are serious about Bible study. I want to encourage you to spend a little money and buy a book called A Concordance. A Concordance is something that tells you all the places in the Bible where the same word occurs.

It's one of the first things I bought when I had little money, more than 40 years ago. And I still have that book. It's been a tremendous blessing to me in my study of the Scriptures through all these 40 years.

38 years is mentioned only in two places in the Bible. You can find that in a Concordance. But you won't find the spiritual meaning of that in the Concordance.

For that you've got to meditate and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you something from that. 38 years. This man was lying there for 38 years.

And the other place where it's mentioned is, you don't have to turn to it, if you want to you can, Deuteronomy chapter 2 and verse 14 where it says that the children of Israel, you know the story, they were brought out of Egypt and they crossed the Red Sea. There's a picture of people who are born again by the blood of the Lamb. Through the Red Sea is a picture of water baptism.

A cloud coming down upon them is a picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They had this threefold experience that all the early Christians had. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, baptized in water, baptized in the Holy Spirit.

But was that the end of their Christianity? Was that the end of their journey? That was only the beginning. And then they walked around through the desert for two years. That was God's plan.

And at the end of two years they came to a place called Kadesh Barnea. It was on the border of this promised land. Now God had promised them, I'll take you out of Egypt and into the promised land of Canaan.

But with 600,000 of them they never got into the promised land. Because when they came to this Kadesh Barnea, they said, these giants are too big, we're scared. They didn't have faith in God.

And they turned back and God said to them, Okay, you're going to spend the next 38 years in the wilderness. Till you all die. It's exactly the same picture of people who don't go into a life of victory.

But who live, what I would say, a life under the law. Romans 6.14 is a wonderful verse which says, Sin cannot be master over you if you are under grace. And if I were to paraphrase it, it says, If you are under law, sin will be master over you.

There are only two options we have. To live under law or under grace. And basically, let me explain that to you in very simple words.

To live under the law means you're struggling forever and ever and ever and ever to try and please God. It's a frustrating life. It's pictured in the Old Testament like 38 years of wandering in the wilderness.

40 years altogether, including the two years they took to get there. So this 38 years, mentioned there and mentioned here, speaks of a life of struggling under the law and never succeeding. I can imagine, picture this man now, this lame man.

You never know when this angel is going to come. At least if you knew the date, you could stand near the pool. But you don't know the date.

You don't know when he's going to turn up. Here's this man, hoping, waiting, waiting, waiting. And suddenly the angel comes towards the pool and he crawls.

And by the time he's crawled, somebody else has jumped in. He's missed it. And then he tries next year, and next year, and next year.

He says, I'll make it next year. 10 years go by. 20 years.

And he doesn't make it. Just like a lot of Christians. And after some time, he just gives up and moves far away from the pool and says, no use.

38 years. Defeated, defeated, defeated. Is there someone like that here? Defeated.

You've given up all hope of a life of victory. You've heard about victorious life. You've heard of a deeper life.

You've read books about it. You've heard of some people who've come into a life and you've tried and never succeeded. You're just like this man who tried and tried and finally just sort of gave up all hope.

And you're still struggling. Life under the law, when there is a better life possible. And Jesus came all the way to the pool of Bethesda.

And as you read here, he healed one man. How many people were there? Verse 3, a great multitude. I believe a multitude must mean at least five or six hundred.

More than there are here this morning. A multitude of sick people. And Jesus comes in and heals one person.

Who said that Jesus healed every sick person he met? He didn't do it here. He didn't even heal one percent of them. One out of all those six hundred people lying there.

But he knew whom to heal. He knew who was desperate. He knew who was needy.

And I want to tell you this morning. There can be a multitude of people sitting here. And the Lord may have come this morning just for you.

Because he knows how desperate you are. How much you've failed. How much you've tried and tried and tried and tried.

And are on the verge of giving up. Perhaps giving up your faith. I want to tell you God loves you this morning.

Jesus loves you. He's got hope for you. Even if nobody else has.

He has hope for you. He has come to bless us. Like he came to bless this man over here.

But he asked him a question. Now I want to say one more thing. As I told you earlier in verse 14.

You read it says. Jesus told him later on after he was healed. Don't sin again.

Lest something worse come upon you. So this fellow's lameness came because of some sin. So in a sense he was reaping what he had sown.

Maybe in his youthful days, in his teenage years. He had done all types of things. And finally got this sickness that made him lame.

And he was reaping for 38 years. You know the devil doesn't tell us when we begin to sin. How many years we're going to reap.

He never tells anybody that. He didn't tell Eve. You know if you eat this tree.

I'll give you a picture of what the next 6,000 years of human history is going to be like. Or even the next 50 years. She would not have gone anywhere near that tree.

And if God were to show you the future. We'd avoid a lot of sins that we are indulging in. So carelessly today.

This man was reaping. We see around us people reaping because of their sin. But even though he was reaping.

Jesus came to him. He came to him. I praise God that I don't have to reap.

Because Jesus reaped it all for me. On the cross. And that's the good news of the gospel.

A man reaps what he sows. True. But if I come to the Lord and say Lord.

I acknowledge my sin. And I don't blame anybody else. I blame myself.

He has taken my reaping for me. He's taken it for you. You don't have to reap.

That punishment that sin deserves. And Jesus came to tell this man. That he could be healed.

But he had to ask him a question. Verse 6. When Jesus saw him laying there. And knew that he'd been there.

Already a long time in that condition. He said to him. Do you want to get well? Now that seems such a ridiculous question.

To go to a hospital and ask a sick person. Do you want to get well? Do you want to get healthy? Do you want to be healthy? Do you want to walk? One would think of course I want to get well. But it's not always true.

You know. I've seen a lot of people in India. Who are beggars.

Who got leprosy. And their noses and fingers are all eaten up. And they go down the streets.

Of our city. Come to our gates. And wander around begging.

And if you were to ask them. Do you want to be healed? The answer is no. Because they won't be able to beg anymore.

Their earning money through begging. Is dependent on their physical disfigurement. It's a terrible thing that they do.

They even catch little children in India. Kidnap them and disfigure them. Cut out their tongue.

Cut out their hands. In order to make them beggars. To beg for money.

And a lot of this. That goes on. And they make them.

And these people. Who kidnap these children. And put them there.

As beggars. Usually get the money. Just for getting drunk.

Terrible things that go on. Where the gospel is not preached. So it was a very valid question.

Do you want to get well? Do you want to finish lying here? Do you want to finish with your begging? And do you want to earn your own living? Do you want to get well? Of course this man wanted to get well. But that's a question the Lord asks us too. Do you really want to have victory over sin? Do you want to be free from sin? We may say yes, I want to be free from sin.

Do you know what it means to be free from sin? It means forgiving that person who hurt you so badly. Do you want to do that? Do you want to forgive that person totally completely from your heart? Who hurt you so badly? Do you want to be free from the love of money? Do you know that the love of money is a sin? The Bible says the love of, not money. Money is not evil.

But the Bible says the love of money is the root of all evil. All sorts of evil. A lot of people don't want to be free from that.

They don't want to be free from the love of money. They want to spend all their life pursuing money. They don't want to forgive certain people.

They say, anybody but that person. Well, they don't want to get well. So what can the Lord do for them? It's a question the Lord asks you.

Do you really want to be healthy? Do you want to walk like Jesus walked? Healthy? Spiritually? So that's a question that we need to answer. Do you want to get victory over sin? Do you want to walk in the Spirit? Do you want to spend your time reading the scriptures more than you watch television? It's a pretty searching question. How many people would say, yes Lord, I do want to know your scriptures.

You know, it's one of the great tragedies of our time is a whole lot of young people who don't know the scriptures but know the names of the movie stars and the baseball players and whatever other games they play here. I know in India there are a lot of Christian young people who know more about the scores and records that people have beaten in various games who don't know the scriptures. And the Lord asks, do you really want to get healthy? To be healthy is to be like Jesus.

To have an interest in the things Jesus was interested in. Do you want that type of life? I'll tell you honestly, a lot of Christians don't. Because a lot of things they are interested in will have to go away.

But for those who are sick and tired and say, Lord, all this is empty. What am I going to get out of all this in eternity? I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, the things you spend your time with today, what

benefit is it going to bring you 2,000 years from now? 2,000 years from now, even if you go to heaven and you sit there and you think back over your life, what benefit is going to accrue to you 2,000 years from now, the way you spend your time today? It's a very good question to ask yourself. Get to know the Scriptures.

Come to the Lord and say, Lord, I want to live a healthy life on this earth. I want to walk. I don't want to be like those lame, impotent, blind, withered people lying there in Bethesda, useless to other people.

And the sick man replied, he says, Sir, I have no men, verse 7, to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. See, his dependence was on man. Everybody around there, all those 600 people, were selfish.

Everybody thought about himself. I've got to get into the pool. You wouldn't find one man there who's trying to help somebody else get into the pool.

No. They're all there for themselves. I jump in first, get healed, and walk out.

And that's the picture of the human race. Selfish, self-centered, everybody thinking about themselves. So no wonder this man said, Lord, I've sat here for 38 years.

Not one man has ever come to help me. You're the first person who ever even came and inquired about my condition. And then, Jesus said to him, Arise.

Take up your pallet and walk. When Jesus speaks a word, there's always power in it. Thousands of years ago, he said, Let there be light.

And there was light. He said, Let there be a firmament. The heavens separated from the earth.

Let trees come out of the earth. The trees came out of the earth. There's a tremendous power in the Word of God.

That's why if you believe this is the Word of God, there's a tremendous power in it. It can bring life. And when Jesus spoke the word, saying, Take up your pallet and walk, immediately the man became well and took up his pallet and began to walk.

The Bible calls the Word of God the Word of His Grace. In Acts 20 verse 32. The Word of His Grace.

The meaning of that is that in every word, in every command of Scripture, in the New Testament, there's a grace that is supplied to keep that promise. God doesn't tell us to do something without giving us the grace to do it. Don't ever think that He'll ask you to do something.

He spoke about forgiving others. God will not ask you to forgive somebody else without giving you the grace to do so. If you send your little boy to the store to buy something, you'll always give him the money to buy it.

You won't send him without the money. And God doesn't tell us to do something without giving us the power to do it. When Jesus spoke to this man, Get up, take up your bed and walk.

He gave him the power. Otherwise, how in the world could he do it? How in the world can we obey the command of Scripture? Rejoice always. How in the world can I do it? Rejoice 24-7.

That's what it says in Philippians 4-4. You think that's possible? You believe that behind that word is a grace that can help you to be free from bad moods, free from murmuring, complaining, grumbling. Imagine what will happen in your home if you began to live like that.

There's grace behind every command. Believe that. If you don't believe that, you go back under the law.

Oh, I've got to do this. And I try and I try and I try and I spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness and never get anywhere. We've got to believe that when God told those Israelites, go into the land of Canaan and occupy it.

He was going to give them power to kill those giants. And Joshua and Caleb discovered that later on. That's what this man discovered.

That there was power given there in his legs all of a sudden. It says here in verse 9 when he began to walk like this. Verse 9, the last part.

Now it was the Sabbath on that day. See, Jesus had a wonderful way of healing people on the Sabbath day. Because he knew that would really irritate the Pharisees.

I almost feel that he sometimes used to look at people and say, wait till the Sabbath day, I'll heal you then. It's true, it's a tremendous ministry of irritating, legalistic, religious people, working them up to help them to see this is not what God wants. This is not religion.

All these silly rules and regulations. It's a life of love and joy and victory and peace and fellowship with others and being good to others and blessing others. Not all these silly little rules and regulations.

And when the Jews saw him, verse 10. Now listen to this. This is the most amazing.

Here we see the utter selfishness and self-centeredness of religious people. Of religious people whose religion consists of rules and regulations and not the love of God. Now when they saw this man, they probably had gone by that pool many times and seen this man lying there for 38 years.

Probably everybody around knew about this man. And when the Jews saw this man who was cured, what should they have said? Praise the Lord! How in the world did you get healed? This is wonderful brother. Tell me how it happened.

They didn't say that. They looked at the calendar and said, Hey, this is Saturday. You shouldn't be carrying your bed on a Sabbath day.

Even a worldly unconverted person would have rejoiced with this man. But not religious people. I tell you, religious people are some of the hardest people to get along with.

They grow old with their religious rules and regulations and become sour and hard to get along with and difficult people when they get old. Don't ever be like such people. And if you don't want to be like such people, start when you're young to follow the religion of Jesus Christ of love and goodness and joy and peace and faithfulness and humility and self-control.

And when you see a sinner converted like this man walking, don't look at what dress he's wearing. Is that the right type of dress for a Christian to wear? That'll come. Wait.

Today that's what a lot of Pharisees do. They're not so excited that the person's converted. I mean, hold up.

Heaven is rejoicing that a sinner has repented. Jesus said the angels rejoice when a sinner repents. But not these Pharisees.

Hey, there's a little rule we are not following. We've got some rules in our church, you know. You're not following that rule.

How do I know all this? I was like that myself. That's how I know. I was a legalist to the core.

I'm sorry to say that. But the Lord took me that way to show me the corruption of this legalistic religion and I thank God he's delivered me. Hopefully.

I was going to say hopefully 100%. But I sometimes see streaks of legalism still in me here and there in some situation, but by God's grace, I don't judge now. I say, Lord, please deliver me from that too.

You know, legalism is like a big fat onion. It's got layer after layer after layer after layer. It takes a long time to get rid of it.

We throw the whole onion away and seek to follow Jesus. He healed people on the Sabbath day and he told people, listen, you hypocrite, if your donkey is thirsty on the Sabbath day, what do you do? Let it die of thirst? No! You take that donkey to the watering trough and give it water. Isn't that work? Yeah.

He says, so also I do good on the Sabbath day. And this man said, well, he says, I don't know about all that, but the person who told me verse 11 made me well said, take up your pallet and walk. And so I walk.

And those of you, I want to give you a word. When some legalist comes to you and says, why are you doing this? You say the one who gave me eternal life told me I'm free. He told me and I don't care what you think about me.

I have a relationship with someone else up in heaven. He told me I'm free. Now I'm not I'm not trying to give you an excuse you ladies to dress in an immodest way or something like that, because there you'd be tempting other people and causing other people to sin.

You know, you can take a word like this and say, yeah, the Lord told me to dress as I like. No, he didn't. He told you to dress modestly and decently.

So that you don't cause other people to sin. So, you know, the devil is great at quoting scripture. He quoted scripture to Jesus too, don't forget.

So he can try and use a word and make liberty an occasion for the flesh, like the Bible says. So we've got to be careful there. But then that's a good word for us to say, this is the word that the Lord has spoken to me and I'm not going to be bound by all these silly rules and regulations.

I want life. Life is the important thing. But he didn't know who had healed him.

Later on, because Jesus had slipped away. That's another wonderful thing. I was saying that in the first meeting, how Jesus would heal people and then slip away.

He didn't want people to know. It's so different from the way healing meetings are conducted today. He didn't get the fellow out and get the crowd and say, hey, give your testimony so that everybody knows I am the great healer.

He never did that. He was so happy that the man was healed. He said, I'm so happy that you healed.

Don't tell anybody. Just praise the Lord and go home. He slipped away, it says in verse 13.

You see that again and again and again. The scriptures, it's a characteristic of Christ and a characteristic of every Christ-like person. He does good and slips away.

A good example for all of us to follow. So we don't get any credit for ourselves. Much more for us to follow.

He was the son of God. We're human beings. He had a right to get glory, but not us.

And it's a shame when Christians do things and seek to draw attention to themselves. We need to learn to slip away. Verse 14.

Jesus found him in the temple. Isn't that wonderful? That the man, after he was healed, he didn't go to a restaurant. He went to a place of worship.

Praise God for that. He said, the first thing I need to do is to go to the temple and praise the Lord for what he's done. Because that's the place where Jesus will find you.

If he had gone to the restaurant, Jesus wouldn't have found him. He went to the temple, and Jesus is usually there, by the way. In the church, in the place of worship.

Today we don't have a physical temple or church, but in the place it can be in our home. And we always get more when we go back to thank God. And that's what this man found.

You know, you can get a healing, get a blessing from God, and that's it. But you go back to thank God, and you'll discover you get something more. Which you wouldn't have got if you hadn't gone back to thank God.

What did this person get? He got a revelation on who Jesus was. He said, Jesus found him there. And then he discovered it was Jesus.

It's like the ten lepers. All ten got healed, we read in Luke 17. One man came back and said, thank you Lord.

And he got salvation as well. What did the other nine get? Physical healing. What did the tenth fellow get? Physical healing plus salvation.

All because he came back. The Lord said, your faith has saved you. That's wonderful.

Many of us have missed something more. Because we got a blessing, and we never came down to worship God and say, thank you Lord. And in the temple, we read here that Jesus told him, don't sin again, verse 14, lest something worse befall you.

The church is a place of correction, rebuke, warning. Don't sin anymore. Does Jesus say words like that? Read it.

Verse 14. Do not sin anymore. You know what he told the woman caught in adultery? Exactly the same words.

Woman, I don't condemn you, but don't sin anymore. It's a word that Christians today need to hear. I don't condemn you.

Praise the Lord for that. Don't sin anymore. Take sin seriously.

I believe that's very important. And the reason? Because if you sin again, something worse can befall you. Did Jesus threaten people with something worse? Did he warn them? He certainly did.

That something worse was hell. And Jesus warned him, if you can go back to your sin again, something worse will happen. You got lame, the next thing won't be lameness.

It will be eternal fire. So we see that sickness is sometimes meant to save us from hell. I had an aunt of mine who was totally unsaved.

She got cancer. And that made her turn to the Lord. She died, but she went to heaven.

Would never have gone there if she hadn't got that cancer. So God turns Where did the cancer come from? The devil, of course. But God used the evil for good.

God's always in the business of turning evil to good. So, sickness, we see here, can turn a man away from sin. And we read here that for this reason, verse 16, the Jews were persecuting Jesus because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

You know, you can get so blind to the good that people are doing that you can find some small little thing in them to criticize. They did that even with Jesus. And religious people are like that.

I don't mean spiritual people. I'm talking about religious as opposed to spiritual. Jesus was spiritual.

The Pharisees were religious. Religion is full of rules and regulations. Such people are very picky about little, little things.

They try to pick out and are completely blind to all the good that this man is doing. That's how they were with Jesus. I want to say one last thing.

Jesus said in verse 17. I want to paraphrase these words. My father's working until now and I myself working.

Because he was doing these things on the Sabbath, verse 16, they criticized him. And Jesus said, My father does not have a Sabbath. He works seven days a week.

You know, the only Sabbath that God had was the one described in Genesis 2 at the end of creation. God rested on the seventh day. And then what happened in the next chapter? Man sinned.

And once man sinned, God began to work again and he never stopped working. He never had a Sabbath. And Jesus said, Since my father doesn't have a Sabbath, I don't have a Sabbath too.

We need physical rest and Jesus sometimes would go for physical rest, but there was a sense in which he was always working, even when he was resting, he was praying. God has never stopped working because

man's in sin. Because there are poor people, withered people, lame people, sick, spiritually all over the world.

And if you're in fellowship with God, you need to have a concern for a world that is lost in sin. Because our Heavenly Father is concerned. Let's bow before God in prayer.

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