

(Manitoba 2001) Jesus Seeks Needy People

by Zac Poonen

Jesus seeks out those who are truly seeking to be healed and is willing to obey God's will, and He offers them a life of victory over sin and a relationship with God.

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Topics: "Blessing Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on a story from John's Gospel, Chapter 5, which illustrates what Jesus came to do for all of us. The preacher emphasizes that God can use various means to reach people who are longing for a godly life, such as tracts, books, tapes, and the internet. The story revolves around a man who had been sick for 38 years and was waiting for something miraculous to happen. The preacher draws a parallel between this man's situation and the Israelites' hesitation to enter the Promised Land in the Old Testament. The sermon concludes by highlighting how God has the power to draw godly people and bring them together, even in different parts of the world.

Transcript

Let's turn to the Word of God in John's Gospel, Chapter 5. In this story that we read here in these few verses, we see a picture of what Jesus came to do, what he came to do for all of us, and what so often he's not able to do in many of our lives. Here it speaks about a pool. It says in verse 2, in Jerusalem there was a pool called Bethesda.

And in these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, withered, waiting for the moving of the waters. For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water. And whoever went into the stirring of the water, stepped enough, was made well, whatever disease he was afflicted.

I've often thought that this is a picture of the Christian church today. We can say that in the Christian church today, in Christendom, what is known as the Christian church, what is known even sometimes among believers, it can be said, verse 3, in these churches lie a great multitude of those who are sick spiritually, blind who cannot see the glory of God, lame who cannot walk without falling into sin continuously, lame when they should be walking, eyes blinded by sin and the love of money and by the love of the honor of men when they should be seeing the glory of God. Great multitude.

They've all got right doctrines. They hear great sermons. But they can't see.

They can't walk. They're withered. And they're waiting.

Like all these people are waiting, hoping someday something will happen. Some angel will come, some messenger will come, some water will be stirred somewhere, and something will happen, and nothing happens. And there was this man, it says, who had been there for 38 years, verse 5, in his sickness.

And, you know, there's one other place in the Bible where it speaks about 38 years, and if you have read the Bible, you know that. And that's in the Old Testament. It's in Deuteronomy 2, verse 14, where it says that the children of Israel came to the borders of the Promised Land two years after they had left Egypt to the place called Kadesh Barnea.

And there, the Lord told them to enter the Promised Land, and they looked at the giants, and they said, No, we can't go in. And the Lord said, Okay, you won't trust Me. I'm going to punish you.

You're going to wander for the next 38 years. And they wandered and wandered and wandered. That was the picture of people who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb from Egypt, who had gone into the Red Sea and been baptized and come out, who had received the cloud from heaven coming upon them.

They were baptized in the Holy Spirit. But in spite of all that, they were wandering in the wilderness for 38 years. It's a picture of life under the law, not under grace.

Life under grace is pictured in the Old Testament in the land of Canaan, the book of Joshua, where they entered in in power. The book of Joshua is like the book of Acts, where they went in in power and put the giants under their feet. They were overcomers.

And I've seen that even among those who don't believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and among those who believe in it, there are people defeated by anger, by the lust of the eyes. It doesn't seem to make a difference, the experience they had. They haven't come to a life of victory because they don't have faith that the grace of God can help them to overcome sin.

And this man is a picture of that. 38 years. That's significant.

That the same 38 years is mentioned here. This man is lying there waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. And the wonderful thing is that Jesus had compassion on him.

You know, Jesus didn't heal everybody there. Many people think there were times when He healed everyone. But there were certain times when He didn't heal everyone.

And here was one of those times. He went into that pool surrounded with all those sick people, and He healed one man and went away. And the others just stayed there.

And I've seen that happen even today. Jesus comes into a church, into a group of people, where there are lots of people who are defeated, frustrated, whose home life is a mess. Husbands and wives who are constantly quarreling, no better than the heathen around them.

Parents who are brought up, who are supposed to be Christians, supposed to be believers, who brought up children who are just as worldly as anybody out in the world. And Jesus comes into groups like that and He works with one person because that one person is ready. Not everybody is ready.

We think we can all come to Jesus. Yeah, you can, if you fulfill this condition. You know what Jesus said? Matthew 11, 28, "Come to Me those who are weary and heavy-legged." If I were to paraphrase that, it means those who are sick and tired of their defeated life.

How many of you are sick and tired of your defeated life here this evening? Some of you glory in your doctrines being right compared to others whose doctrines are not right. Some of you glory in experiences of the Holy Spirit that you keep testifying year after year after year after year, the same old experience you had 20 years ago. You caught a date.

Dates are on gravestones. Jesus came not to give us a date. He came to give us life.

He came to make us holy. He came to give us the power of the Holy Spirit so that we could overcome sin, so that we could be a blessing to other people, not testify about experiences and the spirit tickling our back and all that type of stuff, but to make us holy. Not just doctrine, not just an experience.

Jesus came to deliver us. And so those who are sick and tired, come to Me. If I were to paraphrase Jesus' words, He was saying, come to Me those who are sick and tired of their defeated life, and I will give you rest.

That rest we just heard about. You know, Jesus came to this man. It says in verse 6, because He knew he'd been lying there a long condition, He asked him one question.

Do you want to get well? Do you want to get well? And that's what the Lord asked us, do you really want this life? We would wonder why He asked that question. There's hardly a sick man in the world who doesn't want to get well. But you know, I've met lepers in India who don't want to get well, because those lepers go down the streets regularly with their noses bitten off and fingers bitten, and people see them and give them money, because they feel sorry for them.

They get a lot of money every day, just walking around. If they were healed, they'd get nothing. Nobody would have any compassion on them anymore.

They'd just look like healthy people. Do you want to get well? And the answer is no. I can get more money this way.

And so it's a very searching question. Do you want to get well? Do you really want Jesus to do all that He's promised in the Scriptures to do? I remember as a young man, when I was 19 years old, I said, yes Lord, I want everything that You've promised in Scripture. There's a price to be paid for it.

Most of these people who followed Jesus got thrown out of the synagogue when they got healed, and they testified, Jesus has healed me. The elders of the synagogue didn't like that. And the elders of the synagogue don't like that even today.

A lot of synagogues in Christendom. Those elders were happy as long as people were blind and lame and withered, but once they got healed, they got disturbed. It's the same today.

And that's why Jesus asked the question, do you want to get well? You'll get thrown out. Do you want to get well? Well, let me think about it, Lord. Okay, think about it.

But those who are sick and tired of their defeated life, come to me. I remember years ago when a man came to me from some denominational church. He came to me and said, Brother Jack, I'm just sick and

tired of that church and all types of wrong things there, and I'd like to join your church.

And I said to him, well, if you're joining our church because you're sick and tired of that church, you'll get sick and tired of us too one day because we're not perfect. But if you're sick and tired of yourself, you're welcome to join us because we're a bunch of people who are sick and tired of ourselves. That's how we came together.

We didn't come together because we were sick and tired of somebody else. We were sick and tired of our defeated life. And we began to seek God, and God gathered a few of us together who were sick and tired of ourselves.

We were not here to point a finger at somebody else or each other. We came because we had a need in ourselves. And Jesus said, come to Me, all you who are sick and tired of yourself, and I'll give you rest.

And He gave us rest. So that's why Jesus said, if you want to get well, He asked you that question. There's a price to be paid if you want to get well.

And you see, this man's answer was, I don't have anybody to help me. You see, our tendency is to look to man always. And Jesus said, rise, take up your bed and walk.

I believe the Lord is saying that to us also today. Walk. You don't have to be defeated.

I think just like those children of Israel left the land of Egypt and two years later they came to the borders of the promised land. Two years. They didn't have to wander for the remaining 38 years.

It's the same way when God brings a little baby into the world. It's a picture of our being born again. Redemption from Egypt is also a picture of being born again.

And a baby being born into the world is a picture of being born again. In two years, almost every baby in the world learns to walk. You know that? Just like those two years of the children of Israel.

In two years, you should be walking in victory over sin. Why is it that so many believers are defeated, defeated and defeated and defeated and defeated despite all their knowledge and all their experiences. Defeated by secret sinful habits.

It's because they are not, they've never become sick and tired of their defeated life. They've never come to Jesus and said, Lord, I don't believe that you ever wanted me to be laying, stumbling, stumbling, stumbling. No, it's not God's will.

God doesn't want you. The Bible says, Romans 6.14, Sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under law but under grace. That is God's will for every one of you.

I want to say to you, just like Jesus had compassion on that sick person who had been defeated, who had been lame for so long. I believe the Lord looks at us with tremendous compassion this evening. You, you must think of yourself there.

You are in that place with that person. The Lord looks at you with compassion. And He wants you to be an overcomer.

He wants you to be an overcomer, to be a testimony to the devil in the world of the power of the grace of God. Every single one of us. He doesn't want us to groan under the burden of the law, under condemnation, under fear, ruled by men, ruled by many doctrines and regulations.

We see here that Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath day, verse 9. It was on the Sabbath that He healed him. And the Jews, you know, the Jews, when they saw this man, now one would have thought that the Jews should have been excited when they saw this man who had been lame for 38 years walking around. But they were not excited.

They were bound by their rules and regulations and all their laws that they could not rejoice that one man had been set free. And so, the only thing they could say to this man, instead of saying, Praise the Lord! How did that happen? How did he walk, brother? Instead of saying that, you know what they said? You know what day it is today? The Sabbath day. Who told you to carry your bag? That's what they told him in verse 10.

He said, The one who made me well said to me, Take up your pallet and walk. And they asked him, Who is this man? And he didn't know. Jesus didn't go around showing off.

He had slipped away, it says, when there was a crowd. But afterwards, Jesus found him in the temple. You know, a lot of people today, if they'd heal a man, they'd hang around there to get a little credit and honor.

Particularly if a crowd gathers. But Jesus was so opposite. Jesus was so different from the preachers and the healers today, who hang around to get the crowd to honor them, to collect the money from them and all that.

He is so different. That's why I don't believe these preachers and healers are filled with the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ. They are filled with some other spirit.

The spirit of the love of money. The spirit of the love of the honor of men. And they go around just glorying in the fact that doctrines are right.

Just look at that. It says there, when Jesus saw the crowd, he slipped away. He was not interested in getting honor from those people.

He didn't come primarily to heal. He came to save. He came to lead people to God.

Not just to do miracles and astound the people. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters, by the bunch of preachers that are roaming around the world today, claiming to be servants of God. Compare them with Jesus.

Compare those people who stand under the spotlight with Jesus Christ. See if they've got His humility. See if they are free from the love of money, like He was.

See if they are free from the honor of men, like He was. See if they will speak to your heart and tell you about your sins, instead of tickling your ears and collecting your money. Yeah.

There's nobody to tell them these things. If Jesus were here, He'd tell them. He slipped away, but He found this man.

He went after this man. I really love that. He went after this man in Bethesda, and He went after this man after that also.

And that's how Jesus comes after one person who is longing. Jesus knows where they are. I found this again and again.

One of the prayers we prayed in our church in the land of India, where we live, where we've been working for 26 years now. When we started, we were just two families. We began to seek God.

God had filled us with the Holy Spirit, and we began to seek God to build a church in the body of Christ that would glorify His name. We started meeting in my home, and one of the prayers we prayed was, Lord, through the years, this is the prayer we prayed, Lord, if there's somebody seeking a godly life in this city, lead him to us, or lead us to him. And if you don't do either of these, tell us what's wrong with us, so that we can set it right, so that He'll come to us.

We want to find those people. We don't want the crowd. No.

In the midst of that crowd of lame, withered, blind people, it's one man I'm looking for. It's one man Jesus is looking for. It's the same today.

In the crowds, He looks for the one who is seeking after godliness, who is seeking to live a spiritual life, who is seeking to live a life where rivers of living water will flow out from Him, blessing other people, who is seeking, who is fed up of His love of money, who is fed up of lusting with His eyes, who is fed up of losing His temper with His wife, who wants to control His tongue and control His eyes, and live for the glory of God. He doesn't find many like that. He finds many who want to preach and give tracts and do this and do that, and activity, activity, activity, but not godliness.

And God's looking for those who are seeking for a godly life. Way back many thousands of years ago, when Satan one day stood before God and said that he roamed around the earth, and God said, Well, you roamed around the earth and you saw everybody, right? Have you seen My servant Joe? He didn't say, Have you seen how he preaches? No. He didn't say, Have you seen how rich he is? He didn't say, Do you know how, Have you seen how well he knows the Bible? There wasn't a Bible there in any case.

He said one thing about him, Have you seen a man like him who is upright, who reverences God and turns away from evil? That's the man God looked for then, and through all these thousands of years since the days of Job, that's the man He's looked for in every land. That's such a man, such a woman He looks for even here. Satan goes around, he looks around at everybody and think if God can point one of you out to the devil and say, Have you seen that one there? Have you seen that daughter of mine? That son of mine? He may not be able to preach well.

Maybe he doesn't even know much of the Bible. But he reverences God, turns away from evil. That's the one person, the one who's seeking godliness in the midst of the crowd of lame, withered and sick people whom Jesus is looking for.

He'll come and touch that person and go away and the others will, nothing will happen to the others. Do you remember once a big crowd thronged around Jesus and one woman got healed because she touched His garment in faith? I've often thought about that when I see great crowds coming to meetings in churches and meeting, great crowds thronging around Jesus. One sinful woman touches Him by faith and gets something which nobody else gets.

That's how this man, he got something which nobody else got. Man looks in the outward appearance, God looks at the heart and He sees in the crowds who are longing for Him, who are longing for godliness. So that's the prayer we prayed.

Lord, if there's anyone seeking for a godly life in the city, please lead him to us or lead us to him or show us what's wrong with us that we can cleanse it away from our life if we are legalistic or if we are cold or if we are parasitical. Please show us, Lord. We'll humble ourselves.

We put our mouth in the dust and repent so that we can be the type of church even if we are only two or three to whom God can draw godly people. And through the years we've seen how God has drawn not just two or three but hundreds and thousands not only in our city but in different parts in the villages among the poor. And brought us in touch with different people in different lands.

God's got amazing ways. I met a brother once in a bus in a public bus transport. He was traveling.

I got into the wrong bus by mistake and that's how I met this brother. God's got amazing ways. He can take up a tract, a book, a tape, the internet.

He can do so many things to reach somebody who's longing for a godly life. That's how he reached this man. And that's how I believe the eyes of the Lord are looking for such people throughout the earth.

Those who look for a godly life. And Jesus came back to him again to lead him further. He met with him once and now he wanted to lead him further.

The first time he only met with him physically. He healed him. And the second time he said Jesus found him in the temple again.

In the midst of all the people pronging that temple, Jesus came to that temple. He was looking for one person. Think of that.

He's not looking for everybody because he knows not everybody is longing for him. A lot of people come to him for some gain. A lot of people are more interested in the opinions of men than what God thinks about them.

Jesus is not looking for such people. He's looking for those who are mourning, who are yearning, who are secretly longing for more of God in their life. Not for the approval of men.

So Jesus came into the midst of the temple and he moved around. It says in verse 14, he found him. And I praise God because this time he led him further.

He gave them more than just healing from his paralysis. Jesus said, now you've become well, don't sin anymore. Have you noticed that? Do, verse 14, do not sin anymore.

That was Jesus' message. I've done something for you now. Don't sin anymore, lest the worst thing come upon you.

Don't sin anymore, so that nothing worse may come upon you. A lot of problems in your life are because of sin. Don't sin anymore.

See, that's the message which is hardly preached today. Do not sin anymore. You know what Jesus told the woman caught in adultery? He told her two things.

I don't condemn you, John 8, verse 11. Do not sin anymore. That was his message.

We've cut it into two. We've just preached one part. I don't condemn you.

What God has joined together, man has separated. You know what God joined together? I don't condemn you. Don't sin anymore.

Don't ever separate it. That's the full Gospel. And Jesus preached that to this man.

Don't sin anymore. And the man went away and told the Jews it was Jesus who had made him well. You know, I noticed that Jesus, when I looked through the Gospel, Jesus had this amazing way of healing people on the Sabbath day.

Have you noticed that? He could have gone to that pool about six days of the week, but he went on the Sabbath day. He had a way of needling and irritating these Jewish people who are so proud of their rules and regulations to really destroy their religion which consisted of laws and rules and regulations. That's why he healed people on the Sabbath day.

Why did he heal people on the Sabbath? Why couldn't he have gone on all the other six days of the week? You know, a lot of people think that Christians should be those who shouldn't disturb any traditions, don't create, let's be peaceful people. If Jesus was like that, he would have gone the six days of the week. He wouldn't have gone there on the Sabbath day.

If he had gone and told the Lord, Lord, Lord, don't disturb these traditions. Go six days of the week and go and heal them. Why do you want to go on the Sabbath day to Bethesda? He'd say, I'm going to go on the Sabbath day.

He was like that. And he really worked up people. He went in the synagogue.

I have a feeling sometimes he'd see a sick man and say, come to the synagogue on Sabbath day, I'll heal you there. You know, because he came to establish a Christianity which had nothing to do with Sabbath days and rules and regulations and rituals and this, that and the other, but which had life, abundant life, purity, love, goodness, humility. That's what he came to give.

And it says here, for this reason, verse 16, the Jews persecuted Jesus because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. He was doing these things on the Sabbath. That's what they... Just imagine how hard-hearted they were, that they couldn't rejoice that a man was healed.

They were more worried about some ritual of theirs that was not kept. I remember years ago when one part of India we had a church and there were some college students who were coming to those meetings in our church. Some of those college students were wayward, going to filthy movies and fooling around and all types of bad habits.

But they were good church members to some debt denomination church they used to go. And the priest didn't... wasn't bothered about the way they lived so long as they came to the church and paid their money and attended the meetings regularly. And then these college students, we used to work among these college students, and they started coming to our meetings.

And they accepted Jesus. And then we baptized them, immersed them, just like the Bible says. And then, boy, those priests became furious.

As long as these young boys and girls were fooling around with each other and drinking and dancing and doing all types of things, the priest was happy. But as long... as soon as they started obeying God, they said, Oh, you've done something serious now. Exactly like those Jews way back there.

They persecuted Jesus. It's the same. Every century it's the same.

People are not disturbed as long as they keep the traditions. It doesn't matter how they live. Let them live in sin, but keep the traditions.

Don't break the Sabbath. We've got different traditions today, but the same old thing. It doesn't matter how you live.

Just keep the traditions. Don't rock the boat, brother. And Jesus came to rock the boat.

He certainly did. He came to set people free from all the chains that tied them, from all the prison bars that people had built, had built around people. And they persecuted Him.

And they persecuted those who followed Him. And you know what Jesus said? Beautiful words. He answered them in verse 17.

Listen to this. And then you'll understand why He healed on the Sabbath day, why He worked on the Sabbath day. He said, My father is working until now, and I myself am working.

I believe the only Sabbath God ever had was the one we read in Genesis 2. There He rested. But very quickly, before the next Sabbath came around, Adam had sinned. And ever since Adam sinned, God has never stopped working.

He's never had a Sabbath for 6,000 years. And Jesus said, My father doesn't have a Sabbath. He works every day.

He works because He's got compassion for lost humanity. And I work. I don't have any Sabbath, He said.

I'm in fellowship with my father who has never had a Sabbath from the day Adam sinned. And I'm in fellowship with him. And he works and I work.

And as long as man is in sin, I will work. As long as man is in sin, I'll reach out to him. And I don't understand how anyone can say he's got the spirit of this Jesus Christ in him and not have the same compassion for fallen sinful man.

I don't understand that. The Holy Spirit did not come primarily to give us experiences. He came to give us that heart of compassion that God has so that we work like Jesus did to bring others into this freedom that Jesus came to give.

So He says, My father works. And as long as my father works, I have no vacation. I have no holiday.

I never retire. There's no retirement for one who's a servant of God. There's no retirement for one who's in fellowship with Jesus.

Even if he's on a vacation, he's witnessing for Christ to somebody. He has no vacation. He may take his family out for vacation, but he looks for opportunities to share Christ with somebody there.

That's how Jesus was. My father's working all the time. And I'm also working.

I want to show you another passage in John chapter 9, where we read of another man. This is a man who was blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, whose sin? This man or his parents? That he should be born blind.

There's something we can learn there. Even today there are people who always connect sickness with sin. They say, Well, why is this fellow sick? Must be some sin.

Must be a lack of faith. Maybe there's some ancestral sin that's come down to him. Maybe some curse that descended through many generations.

It's a lot of garbage. Jesus said neither he nor his parents. Sin, that's not a thing.

We're living in a world that's under the curse. We have to face the fact that that curse is not being completely lifted. And the clearest proof of that is even spirit-filled believers die.

Doesn't that prove that we still suffer the effects of the curse? One day it'll be removed when no believer will ever die again. Death is the result of the curse. And so many people forget that.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that when we're sick we shouldn't pray to Jesus to heal us. I do.

I've done that all my life. Whenever I'm sick, I pray to Jesus to heal me. I've always prayed for my family that Jesus would heal them.

But I still... But with that wonderful truth that Jesus hears prayer and heals sickness, I also balance with this other truth that I'm still living in a world which is under the curse. And I will die one day if the Lord doesn't come. That curse affects our body.

The outer man decays. So don't always attribute sickness to some sin in somebody's life like these disciples did. And again, Jesus said, we must work.

Notice the same thing we read in John 5. We must work. Now He said, we. John 5, He said, I. But now He says to His disciples, we, you and I, we don't have a Sabbath.

The Lord's working. People are in sin. And every day my heart is weighed down, Jesus said.

When I see a man in sin, when I see a man in need, I don't care whether it's a Sabbath day, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. I don't care whether I'm on a vacation. I don't care whether I'm 85 years old and retired.

It doesn't make a difference. There's a man in need. My heavenly Father is working.

I believe a true Christian is gripped by that spirit of Christ. Jesus was like that. And then He told His blind man, go wash in the pool of Siloam.

And he went and washed, and he came back seeing. And it says here, verse 14, it was a Sabbath day when Jesus opened His eyes. The same old thing.

Jesus seemed to heal people only on the Sabbath day. And again the Jews were upset, saying, how can this be? Verse 16, the Pharisees said, this man cannot be from God, because he doesn't keep the Sabbath. How did they find out whether a man is from God? Does he keep the traditions of our group? Is that how we find out whether a man is from God? Couldn't they look at his life and see his humility, his purity, his freedom from the love of money? They couldn't see all that.

They all wanted to see, does he agree with all the doctrines in our group? Does he keep the rules of our group? The same blindness that there was way back there, two thousand years ago, you find throughout the ages, you find in almost every group in Christendom. We evaluate people by, are they godly or not, by this question. Does he agree with all my doctrines? Does he keep all the rules and regulations of our group? Otherwise he cannot be from God.

Do you see how blind we are, even today? And the Jews went to his parents and asked him, is this your son? How is his eyes open? And the parents said in verse 21, well, we don't know. You ask him, he's of age. Because they were afraid that they would be put out of the synagogue.

You see how the same thing, these things are written for our instruction. Parents know, something good has happened to their son. Those parents should have been so excited.

This child of mine who was born blind, now 30 years old, his eyes are open all of a sudden. They should have been so excited. They should have stood with Jesus Christ, this son of mine who was living such a wayward, godless life.

Now he's become a Christian, a true disciple of Jesus. His life has changed. And so many parents, instead of rejoicing over that, they say, he's not keeping the rules.

And that's what they got upset. They were diplomats. A lot of Christians today are just diplomats.

They just say, what do the rulers of the synagogue come and ask? Oh, well, I don't know. You better ask him. But that man, he was bold in his testimony.

He said, you may say what you like, but one thing I know. Once I was blind, but now I see. Whatever you may say, he said, I know one thing.

I was blind, but now I see. And that's our testimony. Jesus came, my brothers and sisters, to demolish the religion of rules and regulations.

That's why he was always healing people on the Sabbath day. He came to deliver man from this religion of rules and regulations and bring them to the freedom of life in God. And through the years, man has begun to rebuild what Jesus destroyed.

I want to show you a verse in Galatians 2. Paul said, Galatians 2, verse 18, If I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. Are you rebuilding what Jesus destroyed? If I rebuild what was once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. What is it that was destroyed? Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 2. It says about Jesus Christ in verse 14, He himself is our peace, who has made both groups into one, breaking down the barrier of the dividing wall.

You know, there was a dividing wall between the Jews and the Gentiles. A wall that the Jews had erected over 1500 years. And the Pharisees made it even higher.

It was a wall of commandments, rules and regulations. And the Jews lived inside that wall. All the Gentiles were outside.

As far as Jews were concerned, there were only two groups of people in the world, the Jews and the Gentiles. And there was this big dividing wall of the law, the commandments. And it says here, Jesus broke that down.

He broke it down because that's the only way these two people could be one. And He abolished in His flesh the enmity, verse 15, which is the law of commandments and ordinances so that He can make these two people into one and establish peace. And what has man done in 2000 years? He's erected that wall again, rebuilt it.

What Jesus destroyed years ago. And when this wall is built up, it again brings a separation between this group and that group. These are the rules of my group.

You don't keep them, so you stay outside the wall. And you have again got multitudes of Christians today in different, different groups who sit inside their walls and say there are only two groups of people in the world. We, the people of God, inside this wall of rules and regulations and all the other people in the world.

It's the same old story. It's happened again and again and again and again. Even though it's written so clearly in Scripture, Jesus broke it down.

It brings an enmity, it says, this law of commandments. It's laws, one brick after another, one law after another, rule after rule of regulations till you're surrounded yourself. Cut yourself off from the rest of the world and think that you're a holy bunch of people sitting over there, pleasing God.

God's not even there. He's outside the wall, brother. He's not inside your wall.

He left long, long ago. As soon as you started building the wall, he left. Did you know that? He came to set people free.

He demolished it. And what did we read in Galatians? If I build again what Jesus destroyed, or what I destroyed in the name of Jesus once, I make myself a transgressor. And if I rebuild what Jesus destroyed, I'm a greater transgressor.

He came to set people free and that's why he kept on healing people on the Sabbath and irritating those people who thought the Sabbath was such a great thing. They said, you must wash your hands and he never washed his hands, just to show them that I don't care for your tradition. He would allow his disciples to eat.

They'd pluck the grain on the Sabbath day and they'd question him. Isn't that wrong? And he would defend them and say, David ate for showbread in the temple. Why can't they eat on the Sabbath day? Man, he said, was not made for the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was made for man. Do you remember that verse in Matthew chapter 12 when the disciples asked him? Very simple statement. Man was not made for the Sabbath.

In other words, it was not that God made the Sabbath on the seventh day and on the eighth day he made man for the Sabbath. Was it like that? No. He made man first.

There was no Sabbath when man was made. And for man, on the seventh day was the Sabbath. And that was man's first day.

For God it was the seventh day. But for Adam, it was the first day. So it was like God saying to Adam, well Adam, I've done all the work.

Now you just enter in and enjoy your very first day of life on earth. Enjoy the benefit of all that I did for you. Then you can go out and work for me.

That's how it was. Man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man.

It's not that... Man is more important. Not those Sabbath rules. It's very important to understand that principle there.

Today people make rules and the rules are more important than this human being. And this human being is condemned and they don't care how he feels. The rules must be kept.

That's the religion that Jesus demolished. He said man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man.

It's to bless him. The purpose of the Sabbath was not to just make man bound by certain rules and regulations. It was supposed to be a day of glorious fellowship with God.

How did Adam spend his first Sabbath? He wasn't sitting with a long face. He was so happy, walking in fellowship with God the whole day. That's the life that Jesus came to bring back to us.

He didn't come to bind us with a whole lot of rules and regulations. But people say, Well, if you don't have rules and regulations, how can we get people to do what God wants them to do? How can we get them to spend time with God? You know, if a young boy and girl love each other, do you have to give them a law? Thou shalt spend one hour talking to each other every day. If they love one another, you don't need it.

In India we have marriages arranged by parents. Sometimes the boys never met the girls. Parents have picked out a girl for the boy.

Parents have picked out a boy for the girl. They meet each other. They get married.

Then perhaps you need regulations. Thou shalt spend one hour every day with each other. And I've discovered that a lot of Christians, they haven't arranged marriage with Jesus Christ.

Not a love marriage. That's the problem. That's why you need rules and regulations.

Thou shalt do this and thou shalt do that. Thou shalt do the other thing. But where a man loves his wife, he doesn't need any rules, I'll tell you that.

He'll take care of her. There's no rule which says, when she is sick, thou shalt take her to the hospital. Why does he need a rule like that? How many rules does a man need who loves his wife with all his heart? He doesn't need any rules.

He'll do more than that man who's trying to live by rules, taking care of his wife, and vice versa. How many rules does a man need who loves Jesus Christ with all his heart? Do you think you need to tell that man who's seen the glory of Jesus with his eyes, you shall not lust after a woman? Now, it's there. It's there for

those who haven't seen the glory of Jesus Christ.

Do you think a man who's seen the glory of living for God can be drawn by the lure of making money in this world? Impossible. Impossible. Do you think a man who has heard God saying, well done, I'm pleased with you, cares for the opinions of people, what people think about him? He doesn't care for that.

It's all a question of our relationship with God. Jesus came to deliver man from rules, to lead him to a higher life, to give him a nature by which he would keep the laws, not because of rules and regulations, but because it was life. You know, let me give you an illustration from people who have leprosy.

When people have leprosy, they lose sensation in their hands, the soles of their feet, and if a nail gets into the soles of their feet, they don't feel it. They can put their hand on a hot stove and not feel it. It'll burn their hand, and they don't feel it.

Thank God you feel it. Do you know that pain is one of the greatest blessings God's ever given us in our body? Imagine if you didn't feel pain when you put your hand on a stove. What would be left of your hand in two or three minutes? Imagine if you didn't feel pain when a nail got into your foot, and you didn't feel it, and it got infected, and got gangrenous, and finally the doctor has to amputate and cut off your foot.

Do you believe pain is a blessing? It certainly is. And why do we feel pain? Because we've got life. Those nerve endings in our hands and feet make us aware of something.

But when those things are dead, like in a leper, he doesn't feel it. And so, when a man doesn't feel it, do you know how they... This is actually how it's done, because there are a lot of lepers in India. My wife used to work with them for many years.

Lepers are given rules, rules which you don't need. You know what type of rules? Don't put your hand on a hot stove. Do you need a rule like that? A leper needs it.

He puts his hand on a hot stove and say, Oh, what is that? Rule number 35. I'm not supposed to put my hand on a stove. He takes it away.

Do you need rule number 35? Thou shall not put thy hand on a hot stove. He's given rules such as, every night before you go to bed, check up the soles of your feet to see if there are any nails inside. That's rule number 89.

Do you need rule number 89? Every night before you go to bed, check up the soles of your feet to see if there are any nails inside. You don't need. Because if a nail did get in, as soon as it went in, no rules.

You'd immediately feel it, because you got light. When you got light, you don't need these rules. It's fellows who don't have light, who need rules and regulations to keep them in order.

That's the thing. The more, and you see, if a man, if a person's got lost his sensation only in his feet, he probably need just a couple of rules for his feet. But if he's lost his sensation in his hands, also he needs more rules.

I'll tell you another thing. Sometimes lepers, their ability to close their eyelids, die, and their eyelids remain open. Now you think that's not serious.

You know, if your eyelids are open throughout the day, you'd die. Rather, you'd be blind. You know why we're not blind? Because our eyelids are closing hundreds of times every day.

The cleanest part of your body is your eyelids. You take a shower once or twice a day, but your eyes are taking a shower hundreds of times. Those things which you call tears, you know what they are? It's God's built-in way of showering your eyes many times a day, cleaning it, so that there's not even one speck of dust in it.

And the water goes, it flows down into your nose. It cleans and cleans and cleans and cleans and cleans, because that's the way your eyes are kept clear. That's why you're so old and you can still see.

But when a man's got leprosy, in some cases, he can't close his eyes. So he's... What do you do when a man cannot close his eyes? That washing doesn't take place. His eyes don't get a shower.

And gradually, dust accumulates there. You know, you walk through the world, there's a lot of dust. There's a lot of dust, you know.

You keep your window open on any day, and you see the film of dust that comes on a table. There's a lot of dust in the world around us. It gets into the eyes.

We don't realize it, because our eyes are blinking and washing all the time. But that leper, it gets in, gets in, gets in, and there's nothing to wash. So he needs another rule.

You must wash your eyes so many times every day. You need that rule? No. Because your eyelids are living.

And the more the parts of a body of a leper are dead, the more rules he needs. Rules which you and I don't need at all. Like I said, a husband and wife who are deeply in love with each other, they don't need rules to care for one another.

Rules are, take a mother with a child, a mother who's just had a child, a baby. How many rules does she need to look after that baby? Even that cat with no eternal soul, that cat doesn't need rules to look after its kittens. That female dog doesn't need rules to look, that mother dog doesn't need rules to look after its little pups.

But, if you appoint a nurse in a hospital to look after a few children, you've got to give her rules. You've got to come at such and such a time. These are the things you must check up for these children at home, in the hospital.

And you mustn't leave before such and such a time. She gets her pay and she does her job. That's the difference between a nurse and a mother, right? World of difference.

Rules are for those who have no heart relationship with God. A mother's got a heart relationship with that child, that cat's got a heart relationship with those kittens. And when a man's got a heart relationship with God, he's free.

Free to sin? Far from it. Free to live a better life than he'd ever live under any bunch of rules and regulations. That's the meaning of being free from the law.

Let me show you a verse in Galatians, chapter 5. I'm sure you've read this verse many times, but I want you to see it and read it carefully. What does it say in Galatians 5.18? If you are led by the Holy Spirit, you're not under the law. Moses went up into the mountain and brought the law.

Jesus went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the exact New Testament equivalent of those tablets of law in the Old Testament. This is it.

Moses came down with two tablets of stone, four commandments written on one, six commandments written on the other, four that related to God, six that related to man. He came with two tablets of stone. Jesus went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit down and gave us love for God and love for man.

We are free from the law. That's what it says here. If you are led by the Holy Spirit, you are not under the law.

You are not under any rules and regulations. But if you are not led by the Spirit, oh, you better keep the law then. See, the law is not for those who are led by the Holy Spirit.

It's for those who are under the Old Covenant. And because many religious leaders feel the only way to get everybody to behave is to make a bunch of rules and regulations, they make a lot of rules and regulations and get them to behave. But that's not God's way.

God's way is to lead them to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit, not to go to date like on a gravestone, but to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit, and then such a man's life will be far higher than any law can ever take him. That is God's will. Because I'll tell you.

Let me give you a practical example. You know, in every church, I think, it is very, very difficult to get people to give money for God's work. Everywhere around the world, people struggle to get people to type.

They threaten them, offer them rewards, saying God will bless you, this, that and the other, somehow to get people to type. And even if they succeed in getting those Christians to type, they type reluctantly. That's the result of law.

Law always makes a man do something, OK, if I will do it, I'll do it, reluctantly. But the Holy Spirit, when a man is filled with the Holy Spirit, he doesn't do anything reluctantly. He does it joyfully.

The Bible says, when you give to God, give joyfully, cheerfully. I'll tell you something. For 40 years, I have never preached typing.

I don't believe that. I don't believe under... It's a good discipline to give 10%. That's OK, I'm not against that.

The person who wants to discipline himself like that, I'm never against it. But, I never see a command about that in the New Testament. That commandment was invented by covetous preachers.

But, I have seen, I'm not talking theory now, we've had a church going for 26 years in many churches in India, and God is my witness. We have never preached typing once in these 26 years in a poor country like India. We've never taken an offering in 26 years in any of our churches to prove that God is not interested in your money.

We've preached godliness. We've preached the baptism, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We've led people to God.

And we've spent thousands and thousands of rupees in spreading the gospel. Because God's people have given cheerfully, joyfully. We just keep a box in the back.

You see, those who want to give, can give. And it overflows. Because we don't preach it.

Because there's life. But when you're led by the Spirit, you don't need a law. That's not theory for me anymore.

I've proved it for 26 years in that area of money where everybody thinks, Oh, unless you force people and tell people, they'll never give. Garbage. Laws are for dead people.

For those who got leprosy, you need this rule, this rule, this rule, this law, this law. And those who are filled with the Holy Spirit, those who are led by the Spirit, rise to a much higher level. They give much more than... I gave much more than types when I got free from that.

I wasn't bound by any laws. And I praise God. My brothers and sisters, Jesus came to make us free.

Not free to sin. If you tell a cat, Now, okay, from today onwards you are permitted to be filthy. Go and roll in the muck and enjoy yourself.

You think that cat's going to do it? No. He doesn't want to do it. He doesn't need rules.

It's nature. It hates filthiness. It's always licking itself to make itself clean.

That is God's way. Not by... In the Old Testament, He gave rules. In the New Testament, He gives us a nature.

That is God's way. And if you have heard my tapes, you have heard the illustration I have used of the pig and the cat. How the pig is controlled by rules, chains.

You can keep it clean. But a cat doesn't need any chains. Because it's got nature.

Supposing God were to permit you today. Okay, you are permitted to sin. Go and enjoy yourself.

Go and lust after women. Go and lose your temper. Go and do all types of wrong things.

You know how I look at it. That would be like God telling me, Okay, from today onwards you are permitted to lick the floor everyday with your tongue. You think I'll do it? I've got freedom to lick the floor.

I was just waiting for that opportunity. I say, No, thank you. I know you are giving me permission, but I don't want to lick the floor.

Why? And the pig likes it. I don't like it. It's nature.

So even if God, even if there is permission to sin, I don't want to do it. Because of nature. Have you seen sin like that? If you were permitted that from today onwards, you are permitted to put your head into the toilet bowl and drink the water there.

Who wants to do that? Permitted to sin. Why is it that we need rules and regulations? You can't do this. You can't do that.

You mustn't put your head in the toilet bowl. You mustn't lick the floor. It's because nature hasn't come yet.

And I agree. We need lots of rules and regulations. You mustn't tell lies.

You mustn't do this. You mustn't do the other thing. You mustn't do the other thing.

The law was for a period till people found life in Christ. All these rules and regulations. The Bible says in Galatians 4. Chapter 3. The law was a school teacher.

Verse 24. To lead us to Christ. It's not only in the matter of nature.

Even the matter of forgiveness of sins. It's like it's referred to here. The law couldn't forgive anybody's sins.

Only Christ could do that. The law couldn't lead anybody to a victorious life. It could only make a person have an appearance of victory.

The law could make a pig clean. Couldn't change its nature. And the more rules and regulations you give to Christians, the more they dress properly, they talk properly, they do things properly, and the nature inside hasn't changed one bit.

That's not God's way. God's way says I'll write my laws in your mind and in your heart. Why is it that so few experience that? I'll tell you why.

Why did Jesus go to the pool of Bethesda and heal just one man? The Lord says Do you want to be made whole? Do you want this life? Are you willing to stand up for God and pay the price? Are you willing to be thrown out of here or thrown out of there? Are you willing to live a life where you couldn't care less what anybody does to you, what anybody says about you? Do you only want to please God in heaven and nobody else? Do you want to be whole? Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He'll do for you what he's done for others. I decided that long, long ago.

I grew up in the Orthodox Church, which prayed to Mary, prayed for the dead and so many things. Forty-two years ago, God saved me from that and I decided one thing. What the Bible says, you're bought with a price.

Don't be the servants of men. I said, Lord, I'll never be the slave of any man in my life. You purchased me with your blood.

I shall serve you. I shall be your slave all my life. I shall do what your word says.

I don't want anybody's approval. I don't want anybody's money. I don't want anybody's flattery or anything.

I want to please you. I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, especially those of you who are young. You've got your whole life ahead of you.

Decide now that you're going to open your being to be filled with God's Holy Spirit so that you can please Him and Him alone. There's a lot more to be said, so we've got many more days to talk about it. Let's pray.

God's word always requires a response from your heart. And if you felt hurt or offended by something you heard today, then you're sure God spoke to you. No doubt about it at all.

Respond to it. Respond to it in the area where you got hurt. The area where you got offended with what was spoken.

That's the very area, perhaps God's been dealing with you in that area for many years. Say, Lord, I want to be made whole. I want to be made whole from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet.

Totally whole. I want to please you. I want to live for you.

I want to live for the glory of God all my days. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. The eyes of the Lord move to and fro.

Looking for those who are sincerely seeking for a godly life. Those who haven't come to criticize, but those who are sick and tired of their own defeated life. He has come only for the sick.

He did not come for those who think they are righteous, He came to call sinners to repentance. And even today, He's come looking for those who know they are sinners and who need to repent. He did not come for those who think they are righteous and who can pick holes in other people.

Maybe one, or two, or three. Those are the only ones He's looking for. Heavenly Father, You know the hearts of every one of us.

As we bow before You, Lord Jesus, be glorified in our midst this evening. I pray You will draw nigh as You pass by, Lord. You know whose hearts are responding.

Those who are sincere, I pray You will give them an assurance that You hear their cry, I pray You'll pour out Your Holy Spirit on them. Fill them, Lord, with that abundant life that You came from heaven to give us. Help us each one.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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