**A Man by a Pool**

**John 5:1-16**

**Introduction:**

There once was a man named “Benny.” He was an all-star athlete in any sport he played. He was the quarterback for his High School football team and was quite good. He was handsome too; girls lined up for the opportunity to be seen with Benny. Benny was never alone, whether it be in the cafeteria, the classroom or locker room he always had someone near him seeking his attention. Benny liked being popular. It made him feel special and wanted… made him feel important and cared for.

When Benny graduated from High School he went on to college, and spent five years learning to be an architect. He was at the top of his class when a firm with headquarters in the city jumped at the chance to sign Benny up on their team. With a high GPA, a great sense of humor and an award winning smile he climbed the corporate ladder rather quickly.

A few years into his career and he met a woman named Elaine. She was beautiful and quickly caught Benny’s eye. She too had everything going for her, a great career, a great smile, a wonderful personality… they seemed destined to be together.

A year later they were married in a little church up on the hill in the center of their minute, picturesque little village.

One day Benny found out he was going to be a daddy… He was blissful at the thought. In fact, before it was all over Benny would be a daddy 4 times…

Years went by, grandkids were born, and Benny’s health began to worsen. One day when he and Elaine went to the doctor’s office for check-ups they got bad news…. Elaine was sick and dying. All the kids and grandkids came to see their now aged grandmother and tried to offer whatever hope they could, but within a year’s time Elaine passed away.

Filled with sadness Benny’s own body began wasting away, and he had never felt so alone in all of his life. For almost a year, Benny lived with his eldest son but the constant care giving had a toll on his marriage and the family thought it best to place Benny into a nursing home. “We’ll visit dad,” they would say to his to make him feel better, but the sad truth was that the visits became far and few between until finally there were none at all.

Benny, the once loved quarterback was now a forgotten, forsaken man, left all alone in the world to fend for himself.

**APPLICATION:** Is it possible that this lame man at the pool of Bethesda had a similar story? Did he have friends somewhere in the world? Did he have a wife who once loved him? Did he have children? If so, where were they? The Bible says that this man lay by the pool of Bethesda alone… there was no one with him. No one was visiting and it seemed that no one cared about this lonely man.

***We Are All Important to Jesus***

J. Vernon McGee once told the story of a little boy who had memorized and quoted John chapter 5. He began with the story of this paralytic by the pool of Bethesda. He was quoting it word for word and he was doing a wonderful job until he came to the word impotent… Instead of saying “impotent” he said “important”. People smiled when he misquoted this, but J. Vernon McGee said that it made perfect sense because, the impotent folk lying at the pool of Bethesda really were important. This paralytic man was important enough for Jesus to take the time to come to this pool and heal him.

We are all important to Jesus… Think about it. What would cause God the Son to leave His throne in heaven to live on this earth for some 33 years as a man, and then allow Himself to be beaten and bruised and hung on an old rugged cross?

ANSWER: Love – Listen to a verse that is well known for expressing the love of God for the world…

**John 3:16 ( NKJV )****For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

There is a verse I love in the Psalms that says…

**Psalms 8:4 ( NKJV )****What is man that You are mindful of him,    And the son of man that You visit him?**

It is incredible to think that God’s mind is full of man… Does God think about us? Oh yes, constantly… His mind is filled with thoughts about us. He thinks about us much more than we think about Him. Can you say that your mind is filled with God? Are you mindful of Him?

In the story before us Jesus was thinking about this paralytic man before the paralytic thought about Him.

We are told in the Scriptures that…

**1 John 4:19 ( NKJV )****We love Him because He first loved us.**

***A Great Multitude***

We know that this paralyzed man was loved by the Lord because He sought him out of a great crowd…

Look with me to verse 3…

**John 5:3 ( NKJV )****In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.**

***Thirty-eight years***

It really is a wonder when you consider that this man was sick for more years than many of that day were alive. He was in this paralyzed state for thirty-eight years.

If people smoke cigarettes for 38 years they are considered unremitting smokers… if they drink for that long they are called alcoholics… if they use drugs for that period of time they are considered to be junkies.

But more specifically, when a person becomes ill and remains ill for many years they become known as chronic… It generally means that they are not expected to get any better, and that their condition will only exacerbate as time progresses.

Let’s line up all that we have thus far… We have a man that has been ill for 38 years, he is alone, probably has no visitors or family to help him with his daily needs, and his only hope in this life is to get into a pool of water that is stirred by an angel (with healing powers) hastily enough before anyone else beats him… Seeing that this man is paralyzed doesn’t offer much hope. There was also a “great multitude” there for the exact same reason. The odds of him getting into that pool before anyone else are like you and I trying to play the “Texas Lottery.”

***Jimmy and the Lottery***

My wife’s Uncle Jim used to play the lottery and rarely ever made any kind of profit. One evening he set out to prove to himself and to others that there is narrowly a chance at winning anything substatial. So he went down to the corner convenience store and bought a whole roll of tickets… $500.00 worth just to see what he would end up with at the end of the night. With his pocket knife in the “scratch position” he opened up the roll and began flaking away the gray film.

I can’t remember how long it took him to get through all those tickets but when he was done, and he counted his winnings I think he lost something like $100.00 dollars.

This man, who was lying by the pool, was losing time after time. But he played the “what if” game as so many lotto players do.

Every time I’d watch Uncle Jim scratch a ticket that was a loser he’d curl his lip and shake his head and sometimes he’s say something I can’t repeat.

How many times did this paralytic shake his head in disgust each time he was beaten into the pool by someone else?

***Jesus Found Him***

Out of all the people that were gathered there at the pool that day, Jesus found the one who couldn’t help himself.

APPLICATION: No matter how bad it gets, the Lord knows where you are and He cares… You may say, “How do you know He cares?

Look with me to 1 Peter 5:7…

Peter, who spent much time with the Lord and was probably there at the pool that day when Jesus approached this paralyzed man says…

**1 Peter 5:7 ( NKJV )****casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**

How much of your care did Peter say you could cast on Jesus? He said, ALL OF IT. Does the world have you full of care/ worry? What’s bothering you today, is it your kids, your family, do you have work problems, health issues, financial burdens or even worse… is there sin in your life that you haven’t dealt with? All of these kinds of problems can really take a toll on a person’s physical and mental health, so Jesus stands ready to relieve you of your burden of whatever sort it is.

What is it that Jesus said in Matthew 11…

**Matthew 11:28-30 ( NKJV )****28. Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.****29. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.****30. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”**

Can you picture yourself giving your cares and concerns to Jesus, then replacing it with the Lord’s yoke which is easy and light? Maybe you need to give your burdens to Jesus. You’ve tried everything else under the sun and still there is no relief in sight. Life can weigh you down with care. Suicide rates are alarmingly high these days, so remember that the Lord cares for you and that **He is willing to lighten your load**, go to Him and cast (throw, get rid of, unload) all your concerns and cares on Him.

***An Angel Stirred the Water***

The Bible indicates that there were times when an angel would come down and stir the waters of this pool.

Look at verse 4…

**John 5:4 ( KJV )   
For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.**

In our day some compare this to the gatherings that happen in Lourdes, France.

***Lourdes***

There is a spring described to [Bernadette Soubirous](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernadette_Soubirous) (the 14 year old girl who “saw the apparition”) in Lourdes France on 25 February 1858. Since that time many thousands of pilgrims have gone to Lourdes and have followed the instruction of this apparition to **"drink at the spring and wash in it".** Source:Wikipedia

Many speculate that this “pool of Bethesda” is an earlier version of this… where multitudes gathered to gain a miracle. Where a great many of individuals would congregate hoping for a cure to their misery.

I’m not going to sit here and tell you that an angel truly stirred the waters of Bethesda or that an angel didn’t stir the waters because I HONESTLY DON’T KNOW.

I do know that angels were used in a miraculous way all throughout the Gospels and the book of Acts… So to say that this stirring of the water by the pool was impossible would be a bit like cutting the rope instead of taking the time to untie the knot… in other words LAZY.

I don’t think it is any harder to believe that an angel can stir up healing waters in a pool than to believe that an angel can help get Peter out of prison, and no one argues about that.

We have to admit that angels exist and they minister to us here on earth. Once we have done this there is no reason to stumble or fall over this passage. It is very possible that God, in His mercy allowed certain men at certain times to be free of their misery and pain.

***Jesus knew his condition***

Look at verses 6 through 8 with me…

**John 5:6-8 ( KJV )****6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?    
7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.****8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.**

What we see in Verse 6 proves the omniscience of Jesus. The Lord not only knew **of** this man, **he knew this man**. He knew that he had been ill and had suffered and struggled for all of those 38 years.

Now think with me… Here we have a man, a lame man lying by a pool (which is his only hope of getting better), patiently waiting for an angel to stir the waters. So obviously this tells us he wants to get better. He clearly desires to be made whole… so the question that Jesus asks him seems to be a “no brainer.”

In verse 6 Jesus asks him… **“Do you want to be made well?” (NKJV)**

Why would He ask such a question? Doesn’t the Lord know that this man desires to walk again? Isn’t it obvious that he would like to be able to take care of himself instead of lying around next to this pool in the company on a multitude of selfish individuals? Doesn’t Jesus know this?

Of course He does. Jesus is God in the flesh… the fullness of deity resides in Him so yes Jesus knew. So you ask, “Why did He ask such a question?” The reason Jesus asked this was because He will not force Himself on anyone. He wants to be invited into our lives. Our kind Savior knocks at the door, where the devil breaks the door down and forces himself on you.

***By Invitation Only***

Jesus will not force Himself on anyone, not even on a church. Do you realize that Jesus needs to be invited into our worship services? The worst thing a church can do is have services where Christ is not invited to come in.

You say, Brother Ray how do you know the invitation needs to be made? Look with me to Revelation chapter 3 for a moment…

Speaking to the Laodicean church Jesus says…

**Revelation 3:14-20 ( NKJV )****14. “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:****15. “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.    
16. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.****17. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—****18. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.    
19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.****20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**

One of the main reasons that churches do not invite the Lord to be a part of their worship services is given in verse 19… People in general do not like rebuke or correction. Jesus says that if He loves you He will correct you of any error in your life.

You’ll notice that later in our text that Jesus does rebuke this lame man and states that the reason for his 38 year long illness was because of sin in his life.

So here we have Jesus, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings… the creator of all that is… visible and invisible asking permission from this lame man to intervene in his life. Can you say WOW with me?

Instead of just simply answering yes… the man goes on to explain to Jesus his predicament. ***“Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” (NKJV)***

In making this statement the man readily admits his need for help. This is an important attribute to have that many lack today. He knew that he was unable to help himself and that he was not able to persuade anyone else to help him.

Notice that Jesus didn’t approach those who were able… but He approached the one who had almost given up all hope. He went to **that one in the multitude** thatdidn’t need to be convinced that he needed help. He was at the end of his rope… no hope for healing, no hope of being normal, no hope of ever walking again.

***The Healing***

So, what Jesus does next totally surprises him… Here is a man with absolutely no hope in sight when Jesus, the very creator God pronounces him well. Look with me to verse 8…

**John 5:8-9 ( KJV )   
8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.**

**9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.**

There are some who would rather avoid those with obvious disabilities because it’s easier to graciously try and ignore them who are bound in a wheelchair rather than to possibly offend them with a misspoken word.

But I want you to notice that **Jesus went to the place where handicap people were in abundance**. He could have avoided the pool of Bethesda by simply coming into Jerusalem from another entrance or gate, but He didn’t. He didn’t neglect the disabled of the community, and we shouldn’t either.

We need to outreach them… We need to love them… embrace them with the arms of Christ’s love. It is very possible that while outreaching to them you just might find your best friend. My daughter Kristen is disabled and is often times bound to a wheelchair, but she is a precious soul… The other day I had a headache and I was complaining about it. Kristen came over to where I was sitting and began to rub my head and shoulders because she was truly concerned about me… if she understands anything she understands pain but rarely complains… I became ashamed of myself complaining at something as minor as a headache when she has endured many painful surgeries in her life and lives everyday with pain. Again, while ministering to them you just might find yourself being ministered to.

Not only did Jesus go to the disabled **but He talked with them…** Sometimes we may feel uncomfortable speaking with someone who has a disability, thinking that we may say something inappropriate so we say nothing at all. But when you are driven by the love of the Lord and simply desire to show someone that you love them and care for them great things can happen…

Notice also that **Jesus offered him help where there was a need**. Jesus used His power to heal this man, this is something that we are unable to do… but we can pray for them… we can offer help where we see a specific need…

Just like our Master (Jesus), we should exhibit care to people with disabilities of whatever sort they are.

If we are the body of Christ then His hands should be reaching out. (Aren’t we His hands?) His feet, through us should be going, and His heart, through us should love.

Are we reaching out to the world? Are we going and are we loving like Jesus would love? As Jesus looked out over Jerusalem one day from the Mount of Olives He said…

**Matthew 23:37 ( NKJV )****“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!**

The Bible also says that… **“…when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” Matthew 9:36 ( NKJV )**

Isn’t that the way we should look at everyone, With the eyes of Jesus? Let us see the heartache of others… Let us see what makes them afraid, their pain, their hopelessness. May we be the feet of Jesus (if we truly are the body of Christ) and simply walk over to where they are and love them as Christ would? Isn’t that what Jesus would do? Lovethem, draw them to Him, and care.

***Jesus Cared but Others Had Their Rules***

Let me ask you a question. If right before your eyes you saw a man who had been ill for some 38 years get healed from a debilitating disease would you be happy, sad, or indifferent. I bet you would be happy to see a once paralyzed man gain the use of their legs again. To be able to see the jubilation in his eyes would be priceless.

It would be great if we could end the story with a “everyone lived happily ever after,” but we can’t. Look with me to verses 9c- 10…

**John 5: 9c-10 ( KJV )****9c. and on the same day was the sabbath.**

**10. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.**

***Who’s Law are We Talking About***

Imagine with me for a moment that you are driving down the street in your brand new car. The new car smell is permeating your nostrils as a cop turns on his lights and the noise of his siren begins to blare. You’re wondering what he could possibly be pulling you over for because you just pulled out of the car lot and hadn’t had enough time to even reach the speed limit.

The officer stands up out of his unit, puts his hat on, adjusts his sunglasses and his badge and approaches your driver’s side window. You watch him coming in your rear view mirror with wonder because you have no idea why he is pulling you over. So you quickly go through the list in your head, inspection sticker, blinkers, headlights, no lane changes… everything seems to be in order so when the cop comes to the window you ask, “What’s the problem officer?”

He then informs you that you are driving in an orange colored car. He adds… it is not lawful for you to drive in an orange vehicle. You say, “That’s ridiculous, I’ve never heard of a law like that… Then he goes on to inform you that it wasn’t a state law it was just the police departments law… because no one at the station liked orange. Then you look at that crazy officer and say, “It’s not your job to make laws it’s your job to enforce them.”

I think this is why Jesus healed so many on the Sabbath Day; He wanted to prove that this was not God’s law, it was man’s law. It was a law that they had added onto the Law of God that says that you can’t work on the Sabbath. You see it wasn’t the Pharisee’s job to make laws it was their job to observe and enforce them.

The law against carrying something on the Sabbath was the last of 39 rules in the “tradition of the elders…” We need to guard ourselves against the mind-set of the Pharisees in our church. Some Christians to this day still follow and try to enforce on others the principles handed down through the years.

We need to be careful not to lay a rule on someone that doesn’t need to be there. This is a good rule of thumb to follow, if the Bible does not spell out a rule, neither should we. You can have your own convictions, your own opinions and you can even express your opinions, but that is where it has to stop… don’t pull out your list of laws, rules and ordinances and try and force them on someone else. It really does more damage than good.

Jesus said something at another Sabbath Day healing that is interesting…

**Luke 13:15-16 ( NKJV )   
15. The Lord then answered him and said, “Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it?    
16. So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”**

I think He would have said the same thing about this lame man at the pool of Bethesda… 38 years bound by paralysis and was freed from it. They should have rejoiced to see such a thing.

The man was now healed and was set free but he had no clue as to who had healed him, ***for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. (NKJV)***

There were a lot of people condensed in this small area and after the Lord had healed the man He slipped into the crowd, but later Jesus caught up with him to explain something important.

***Sometimes Sin is the Cause of Illness***

Job was a man of God. He loved the Lord, and served the Lord but he was struck with tragedy and illness. What sin did Job do to deserve losing his family, his wealth and his health? Well, it wasn’t his sin that caused his doom, it was a test from God. It was something that God used to mold Job, to fashion him into the man He wanted him to be.

Do you remember the story found in John chapter 9?

**John 9:1-7 ( NKJV )****1. Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.****2. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”   
3. Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.    
4. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work.****5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”   
6. When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.    
7. And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.**

Apparently this man was born blind so that Jesus could display His power and great authority over disease and so that some would come to believe in Him as the long awaited Messiah.

But what about the man who was lying by the pool of Bethesda, why had he been sick for all those years? Look at verses 14-15…

**John 5:14 ( KJV )   
14. “Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple…”**

Jesus, after healing this man disappeared through the crowd and later found this healed individual in the Temple. Could it be that he wanted to thank the Lord for his healing? Reminds me of the story of the 10 lepers that Jesus heals and only one of them came back to thank Him… Well we find this man in the Temple. We really don’t know for a fact why he is there but we can assume that he was there to thank the Lord God that he, after 38 years, now had full use of his body.

When Jesus finds him, He tells him…

**“…Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”  V. 14b**

Jesus gives the man a stern warning, and that warning is that sin has its consequences. The Lord makes it crystal clear that 38 years suffering as a paralytic or a lame man was nothing compared to what “**worse thing”** could happen to him (Eternity in hell). This man needed to stop sinning and come to salvation in Christ. Have you come to Christ?

**\*\*\* Prayer and Invitation**