

## John Ch 5 Vs 1-15

“Don’t Argue; Obey”

As we journey through the gospel of John it’s important that we remember that John has a specific agenda in chronicling, or writing down and recording the things he did. He has a very specific message that he’s seeking to send out, because Jesus did all kinds of things during His earthly ministry. Countless miracles and untold good deeds, and John could’ve given the account of any number of them for any number of reasons, seeking to show *this* side *of* Jesus, or *that* reality *about* Jesus. “*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*” John 20:31 John very carefully selected a specific number of events in order that we might glean from them the very nature of Jesus as God come in the flesh in order that He might reach down into the very heart of mankind and meet the deepest need therein.

No matter how it’s articulated, whether it be in being born again to the aged Nicodemus, or needing to quench the thirst of our dry and dusty soul by taking in the living waters of everlasting life to the woman at the well; or having the hunger that yearns for more than what this life can offer satisfied through the bread of life come down from heaven to the hungry multitude. However we may seek to articulate it, or see it laid out for us in the scriptures, the need is always met the same way. Through a relationship with Jesus Christ predicated upon His forgiveness of our sin ultimately through the laying down of His life upon the cross and shedding His blood, Him pouring out His life that we might have everlasting life, Him becoming the Son of Man that we might become the sons of God. Our need as humanity is found not in a program, or politics, but in a Person, the Person of Jesus Christ and These things were written that we might see Jesus for the reality of who He is; the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him you might have life in His name.

In this Ch that lies before us we have another picture laid out in this practical encounter of Jesus Christ with this lame man of Jesus coming to seek and to save that which was lost. He’s not going to the beautiful people of Jerusalem, but again the one’s who know their needs go well beyond their ability to deal with it, and in that they find themselves in utter desperation because they know that nothing they do is going to better their situation, they’re prepared to look outside themselves for hope because there is no hope left in themselves or the circumstances around them. We might understand it like this; they’re at the end of themselves. and As you well know it’s when we reach the end of ourselves that we meet Christ who’s been there all along just waiting on us to finally get there.

John Ch 5 finds the *impotent* meeting the *omnipotent*, the *powerless* meeting the *All-Powerful*, one who is sick being sought out by our Healer, one who is broken whom Jesus will make whole, and a *sinner* whom as you may assume has a life changing personal encounter with the *Savior*. Consequently this ch also marks the pivot point in Jesus' ministry regarding His relationship to the religious leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees. Its in John Ch 5 that we see them going from being willing to *tolerate* Him, to seeking to *eradicate* Him, it's from this point that murder rests in their hearts towards Jesus Christ

Now you recall that in the final portion of our last study Jesus healed the son of a nobleman by a word, he came in desperation interceding for his dying son and Jesus responded. and Of course we received the exhortation to be those who intercede on the behalf of those dying around us, who are near and dear to us who don't know Jesus Christ Have never been touched by Jesus Christ That we get on our faces before Him on their behalf and cry out to Him that He might touch *them* and give them new life. and We read in Vs 1 of Ch 5

Vs1

Now as for which feast this was there is obviously much debate and yet at the same time there's little to no relevance to that anyway or else John would've told us which feast it was. The 2 primary things that John is simply showing us here is what the reasoning behind Jesus' being in Jerusalem was and #2 the fact that we illustrated last week, that Jesus was a doer of the Word. The scriptures repeatedly said, "*Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles.*" Deut 16:16 and Again, as for which feast this was in particular we just don't know for sure. But these feast times were sort of like Israeli conferences. You know we'll go to a conference a time or 2 throughout the year and they serve as a time of renewing, and refreshing, and a reminding of who God is and what He's done *for* us and we leave with a fresh zeal *towards* Him, and love *for* Him and further desire to *serve* Him. and That's how these feasts acted for the Jew, they would go and be reminded of God's faithfulness, refreshed in His goodness, and renewed in their desire to serve Him. But Jesus was a doer of the word, and even so we're to be doers of the Word. Jesus said, "I've given you an example that you should do likewise." James said, "*Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*" James 1:22 We're to make practical application of the principles and precepts of God's Word in our lives.

Vs2

So now John sets the scene for this happening that's about to take place in the meeting of the impotent with the omnipotent, it's near a pool of water called Bethesda which happens to mean, "House of Mercy." and He gives us the local, it's near the sheep gate, and how profound that the Lamb of God would enter the scene by the Sheep Gate, to come to the house of mercy to bring healing to someone's life.

Perhaps this place is your Bethesda today, and the Lamb of God has drawn near that He might touch your life, meet some deep need of healing that you may have somewhere down in your heart. He wants to raise you up from whatever it is that you're looking to support you and give you fresh direction for your life, don't argue with Him, be obedient to Him. We read here that this pool has 5 porches all around it.

Vs3-4

Now again there's lots of conjecture here and what I don't want to do is get side tracked from the main thing John is seeking to show us here and it's not what's said about these waters. My particular feeling is that since Greek isn't punctuated the way English is and all these commas and periods have been inserted as best the translators can, if there was a way imply quotation marks around the word "angel" in vs 4 they would probably be there. This seems to be the tradition or the legend of this pool of water.

Now I in no way want to infer that God couldn't have done such a thing; certainly He's healed many people in the scriptures in many radical ways. and Obviously something extraordinary was happening here from time to time or else eventually all these handicapped people would take note of person after person never being changed and they'd just go home, or find somewhere else to stay. But something apparently was happening and so because of that this place became a magnet to everyone in that region who had an infirmity of any kind.

So we read in vs 3 that it was a "great multitude" of sick people, or impotent people who lay around the pool. and I've been in poverty stricken places, where people had all sorts of grotesque disfigurements and ailments, blind and lame, and I can just imagine that this was an incredibly pathetic (in the sense of sad and hopeless) kind of scene.

Because there was no small number of people that gathered around this place, we read that it was a great multitude who was needing help. They were sick, and specifically we have mentioned 3 types of ailments who were readily in need, blind, lame, and paralyzed. and You know where I'm going with this, I just can't help but see the parallel to our own society and culture today. and Perhaps not as dramatic as this in the physical as far as our particular culture and community is concerned, but surely there's radical spiritual parallels. Great multitudes of people in Joplin Mo, in Carthage, in Neosho, Webb-City, Carl-junction, Diamond and Seneca who are sick and in need, the can't see the truth (they're blind), they're lame, and unable to move on their own being paralyzed in sin.

In their hearts they're just lying there despondent, and hopeless, just waiting for something to stir, something to change, some glimmer of hope that they might get in on that they might get on their feet and have purpose and direction in life. They're just waiting for the waters to stir, that they might be made well, but they're looking the wrong direction, all these people had their focus on the water and yet the Son of God was right in their very midst and they didn't even see Him. They were placing their hopes in the things of this world, and even if you take the eternal perspective out of it the chances of me getting in the waters of success, or getting in on that deal that's going to change my situation or circumstance, they're 1 in a million. There's so many people pressing in on those things that by the time I see a chance, someone else beats me to the punch. But because all these people were looking to, and placing their hopes in the stirring of the waters of this life, they missed the well-spring of everlasting life that could've brought healing to them all.

It's just conjecture on my part, but I have this feeling that the man that Jesus sought out on these porches didn't even look to those waters anymore. All hope of him ever being changed by the happenings of this life had been ripped away, and as for those waters, he'd given up on them, notice.

Vs5-7

Or to put it another way, "I've given up on those waters." Now as we know Scripture only has 1 interpretation but it has many applications. and I've obviously chosen to apply this text to us in a way that says, "Get your eyes off the waters of this life and place them on Jesus Christ because He's the one the brings healing and change to your life." But we've could've gone another route and I just want you to see it, here in vs 7 the man basically says, "Everyone out there is concerned for #1.

I don't have anyone who'll lead me to the waters of life when I sense them stirring, and I know if someone would but lead me I could be changed, but no one will take the time." and Of course Jesus takes the time. It's like when Philip was led out into the wilderness by the Spirit and came across the Ethiopian eunuch, and he was reading from the scriptures and sensed the waters were stirring but there was no one to lead him to them. and So Philip caught up to him and said, "Do you understand what you're reading?" and He said, "How can I unless someone guides me?" "Unless someone leads me, and ministers to me?" and So Philip looked at what he was reading, and from the place he was reading he preached Christ to him, the man believed and was baptized, Philip in essence set his own agenda aside having been in Samaria and placed that man in the pool that his life might be changed.

Paul said it like this, "*How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'*" Rom 10:14-15

In other words most people aren't going to bathe in the life changing waters of Jesus Christ unless someone picks them up and places them in that pool. Because they can't get there on their own, they're blind, and lame, and paralyzed, just like you were until someone ministered to you and picked you up in prayer or by their witness and placed you in the pool that your life might be changed forever. This guy doesn't have that person, no one will minister to him, and I wonder how many people you know, that I know who are just like this guy. They want change in their lives, they're despondent and depressed, but no one will minister to them, pray for them, share with them, and so they just lie their hopeless. That's where this man is at, but in our study for today he's right where he needs to be, because having lost all hope in anything of this world changing his life he's white for the harvest, ready to be reaped in such a way that'll benefit him not only in this life, but forever.

Now it took him along time to get there, and that's the way it is with some people, you wonder how low will this person have to sink before they're ready to meet with Jesus? and You're just so pained watching them endure tragedy after, heartbreak, after suffering, after affliction. and It seems like one bad deal leading to a worse deal, and you just think, when will you be open to Jesus and quite looking to the waters of this life, when will you realize you just can't hope in them any longer? It took this guy 38yrs. and Before we move on I want you to take notice of the question Jesus asks him in vs 6, "Do you want to be made well?"

Now that sounds like a ridiculous question but believe me it's legit, there are people who don't want to be made well. They don't want to walk on their own, that involves responsibility; they don't want to see the truth; that involves accountability. They'd rather just hang out in their own little world of misery and feed off the sympathy and welfare of those around them, they'd rather live in the pigpen of this life as the prodigal, then confess their sin, humble themselves before Jesus and receive Him into their life. It's amazing how many people would rather lead a hopeless life, being with out hope being with out God in this world, then give their heart to Jesus Christ "I mean, He might want to change me, actually give me purpose, a new found freedom and direction in this life, no thanks I'd rather wallow in the mire of this world."

If that person has no desire to be made whole, but they've found themselves contented in the things of this world, then there's nothing that can be done for them. There's nothing that can be done for the person who desires no help. and I think this is still the question that Jesus asks today to those who are confronted by Him, He gives them the choice, perhaps you're confronted with that choice now, "Do you want to be made well?" "Do you want God to change your life?" This guy says, "Yeah, I do. But I've given up on this world, the things of this world to bring that change, to make me whole, I've become disillusioned with it all."

## Vs 8-9

Don't you love the finality of the word of the Lord? Jesus didn't say, "Ok, go to this 12 step program down the road, they're going to counsel you, and psychologize you, give you weeks of therapy and then, you'll be on the road to recovery. Jesus believed in the 1 step program, from death to life, brokenness to whole, from out of Christ, to in Christ. and Once you're in Christ He'll take care of your life, and notice that the Lord's commands are equivalent to His enablements. He asked this man to do the impossible, but when this man purposed to obey His word, He enabled him to do it. But unlike this man, instead of obeying Jesus we so often argue with Him. We don't take Jesus at His word, we want to say why we can't, or how we've tried so many times before and it hasn't worked out.

But the point here is that if you'll just obey, If I'll only act upon what He says to me instead of argue with what He says to me, and seek to somehow rationalize what He says to me, then He'll enable me to do it. What is it that the Lord has commanded you to do lately, or maybe to quit doing? Have you acted upon it, or argued with it? This guy could've stayed on his mat and never tried to get up, "38 years I've been like this, if I could've gotten up believe me I would've!" "If I could've quit this bad habit, or acted this certain way I would've, but this is who I am, I can't change," then lay there on your mat and remain in misery. But believe me when I say as soon as Jesus speaks it to you, He'll enable you with the power to obey if you'll just act on it, "Rise."

2<sup>ndly</sup> Take up your bed, don't save your place, or make provision incase it doesn't work out doing what Jesus said. Don't look to that which you've sought in times past to support you or comfort you to be the source of comfort and support anymore, take up your bed. Don't keep a video under the bed or at the bottom of the drawer just in case you get that craving again. Don't keep a 6 pack in back the fridge just incase the stress of the day gets to be too much. Don't keep that guys #, or that gals # around if for whatever reason you decide you want to get together again, or if no one else calls you in a few weeks. Take up your bed; don't save your spot among the sick in case you need to return there.

Finally in vs 8, walk. Don't look to anyone else to carry you, Jesus has given you all you need to make it in this life, don't depend on me, or some counselor, look to Jesus Christ Walk in the Spirit, *everything* we need pertaining to life and godliness is found in the word of God, read your bibles. Peter tells us that it's through the knowledge of Him, (that is by the word of God,) "*By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*" 2 Peter 1:4 Jon Courson makes this comment, "Everything we need to escape the sickness and sadness of this world is found in the exceedingly great and precious promises of the Bible. Yet people don't read their Bibles. They'll drive fifty minutes to go to a thirty minute counseling appointment, but they won't spend fifteen minutes in the Word. It's a tragedy."

The point here is that if you want to be made well, if you want to be made whole, be obedient to the direction of God's Word for your life. Now why does John point out that it's the Sabbath? Because this is going to be the hinge that swings the door of animosity towards Jesus right open before these religious leaders. To violate the Sabbath was a violation of the ordinance of God, a crime punishable by death. Now Jesus didn't violate the Sabbath in doing this work, only their interpretation of it, their traditions have been broken, not the word of God. The Law said, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." Now they had all these rules and regulations as to what that constituted and we spoke of that before, it was called the Mishna, but that was man's word about God's Word, not God's Word.

Vs10

Talk about raining on his parade, here he's been, 38yrs in this condition, he finally gets up, is totally healed and do these guys rejoice with him? No, they're all, "Hey! You're breaking the Law, do you want to be put to death?" I mean how far from the heart of God can you be? It's been said that to a bitter and sour stomach, no dish on the table looks good. In other words, when someone has a bitter spirit, nothing's going to appease them, or seem acceptable to them no matter what you may do or how you may try. When you're sick nothing looks good to you, and when you have critical spirit, nothing will please you. Guard against a critical, bitter spirit, some people don't see anything good in anything. This guy's life has just been transformed and all they can do is gripe about it. If you have a critical spirit, let the Lord deal with you today.

Vs11-13

Notice it doesn't say, "He didn't know who healed him because Jesus slipped out for a photo shoot for the cover of Judaism today." As soon as Jesus picked up on the fact that people would begin to swarm Him for what He could do instead of who He was, He slipped away from the scene. He didn't look for the fanfare over His good deeds, didn't look to be recognized by man, He made Himself of no reputation. Just slipped away before the mob mentality took over. and By the way, notice there were multitudes in that place, but Jesus only healed 1 of them. There's a big error today that takes the mentality that wherever Jesus is, healing is on the way, there were plenty who were in His presence that day, who were never physically healed.

Vs14

I love this, Jesus changes a man's life, and the man says, "I'm going to church." and That's always the way it is, when you meet Jesus, you want to go where His Word is taught, and His praises are proclaimed, you want to be around God's children because you're His child. This guy had some lost time to make up for and so he headed for the Temple. and Jesus will always find you when you make your way to that place of praise. Oh not locationally, but again relationally, God inhabits the praises of His people. and What's the lesson of vs 14?

Jesus tells Him, “I’ve changed your life, now *repentance* demands *responsibility*. You’ve been given *new* life, don’t retreat to the *old* ways, sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you. Not only in this age, but also in the age to come, it’s possible that this man had done something to incur his problem, doesn’t mean that every illness is the result of sin, oh ultimately by the fall of man that’s the case. But don’t think that every time someone gets ill (regardless of the severity) that it’s because of sin in their lives. If you’re out drinking, you can get cirrhosis of the liver, if you’re promiscuous, you can wind up with any number of disease as a result of that. But such is not always the case with every illness.

But warning that’s here for us all is in those 3 words, “Sin no more.” If Jesus has changed your life you have a responsibility towards Him. If you’ve been given new life you’re not to go back to the old ways of life, don’t parrot your worldly life, the things you did when you were in the world that were working against you spiritually and not for you. Jesus initiated the change in him, as He does with us all, and now he has a responsibility to lead his life accordingly. Divine initiate and human responsibility.

Vs 15

It’s Jesus who has and can make you well, in every arena and each sphere of life, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, look *to* Him, lean *on* Him, and trust *in* Him. and When it comes to His word for your life, don’t argue; obey.

Maybe you’re here today and Jesus is speaking to your heart, He’s confronting you and posing to you this question, “Do you *want* to be made well?” Are you finished looking to the watering holes of this life to somehow change your life? Jesus wants to forgive you of everything you’ve ever done, He came to this earth, laid down His life, and shed His blood that He might raise you up from sin and death, breath new life into you and give you purpose and direction. and He’ll enable you, if you’ll obey Him, if you’ll trust what He said when He said that if you’ll just believe in Me, you’ll never perish, but have everlasting life, is Jesus knocking on the door of your heart? He wants to wash you white as snow and make you a new creation, but only if you’ll let Him, let me encourage you, receive Jesus Christ today.