

# John 5:1-9 (Teaching)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. Good morning. Back in the Gospel of John this morning, starting John chapter 5.

John 5 verses 1 through about 18 is actually one of my favorite passages in Scripture. I've preached it several times and actually just read it to my Aunt Hazel a few days ago while she was in the hospital. There's a lot to this first little bit here in the first passage in the Gospel of John. But this is another of those passages though that we talked several Sundays ago. We have to take in context of how it comes in the Scripture, taking in the context of the very end of John chapter 2 which says, Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover and the feast day, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did.

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them because he knew all men and he did not that any should testify of man for he knew what was in man.

[ 1 : 21 ] And then John chapter 3, we started the individual accounts, the account with Nicodemus. In John chapter 4 we had the account of Jesus with the woman at the well.

And here in John chapter 5 we have an account of Jesus again on individual terms with this man that's laying here at the pool of Bethesda.

So with all that in mind, we'll start reading here in John chapter 5. It says, After this there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

This is kind of an odd passage right off the bat because it says after this which is very unlike John to write that.

John normally when he writes this authorize Gospel says after these things. So he says after this. Now this being said, once we get down to verse 4, there are certain English translations that we have of the Bible that omit verse 4 because in the earliest copies that we have of the Greek manuscripts verse 4 doesn't exist in those.

[ 2 : 33 ] However, in some of the later copies it is added in the margin. And so some people think that John's Gospel was added to and obviously if something was in the margin it was.

But if we didn't have verse 4 and we just skip down to verse 7 which talks about the man talking about when the water is troubled he has no man to put him in there, that would make a bit of sense to us.

So verse 4 is very pertinent that we have that. But last time some English translations don't have that, some of them do. And this isn't the only verse like that.

It's like at various English translations that we have certain things because there's two different types of texts that are taken. There's older copies and there's newer copies that we have that these translations that we have were translated from, I guess you could say.

But this is odd for John to say after this instead of after these things. But regardless it says after this there was a feast of the Jews. We are not told what feast this is.

[ 3 : 50 ] There are some people out there who say this was yet another Passover. But folks we just celebrated a Passover in the Scriptures. Two chapters before this. I don't think this would have been passed over.

I think more than likely, and Scripture doesn't tell us more than likely this would have been the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost took place 50 days after the Passover started and the feast of unleavened bread began and ended.

So more than likely this was Pentecost because that would have given Jesus time after that Passover feast to have this conversation with Nicodemus and then to have needs to stop in Samaria and have this conversation with the woman at the well and spend two days in Samaria and all these other things.

So I would say there was probably about 50 days that passed in that time. More than likely this was the feast of Pentecost that we're talking about. But it says, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And y'all have heard me say before that anywhere that you were in the region round about Jerusalem, you went up to Jerusalem. Even if you were north of Jerusalem, when you said that you were still going up because Jerusalem was situated upon a hill and everyone referred to it as going up to Jerusalem.

[ 5 : 09 ] Verse 2, now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda having five porches. If you notice in your King James version, that's what you're using there in verse 2, that word market is italicized.

That was added by the translators. It's not part of the original text that was used to translate this.

So the people that were translating added that word market trying to help us to understand this.

This was more than likely though, actually the sheep gate that was going into Jerusalem.

Even if it was the market, I can about guarantee you that it would have been close to the sheep gate headed into Jerusalem. We read about the sheep gate in the book of Nehemiah.

A lot of people read the book of Nehemiah and think that it's a boring read. There's actually a lot of really good stuff in the book of Nehemiah and there's more to it than just pep talking congregations and working together to accomplish a goal.

[ 6 : 19 ] That's about the only sermon you ever hear preached out of the book of Nehemiah.

There's a whole lot more in there. You read in the book of Nehemiah, beginning in chapter 3, you read about them, the different groups of people building their sections of the wall and their gates and so on and it goes full circle around.

And the very last part of it that was built by two groups of people, one of them being goldsmiths and I swear I can't remember now what the other one was.

But then they wound up back at the sheep gate. So how great it is to have our Savior here coming into Jerusalem and talking about the sheep gate.

What would have come in through the sheep gate? This would have been the sheep and the Lamb of God entering into Jerusalem by the sheep market and people are coming to these porches here. It says there's a Jerusalem by the sheep market of Poole which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda having five porches. When we think of a porch, we think of an addition on the outside of our house.

[ 7 : 35 ] Missy and I have a front porch, we have a back porch. Most of you probably have porches of some kind. This isn't exactly what is being talked about here though. It would have been five colonnades, five places where there would have been a covering over top so that people could get some relief from the sun that was coming into that particular area.

But regardless, it referred to it as five porches. What's significant about this? Well, if you've ever studied biblical numerology, you'll know that the number five is the number of favor and the number of grace.

Here comes Jesus Christ into this area where the sheep market or the sheep gate is. There's five porches or five colonnades here.

Grace itself has walked in on the scene here at this pool of Bethesda and something else to keep in mind. Bethesda in its most literal form actually means mercy.

We need to keep that in consideration as we read through this as well. In these, talking about the porches, in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

[ 8 : 53 ] And I've told you all since we've been going through John that John does a really good job of describing the current state of his time 2,000 years ago.

The state that Israel was currently in as far as their religion goes and as far as their dependence on ordinances, their dependence on ceremonies, and their dependence on everything except for the one who put forth those ordinances and the ones who give them those ceremonies.

Not only were they dependent on the ceremonies themselves, but they were depending on other laws that have been instituted by Pharisees and some by Sadducees.

But by the religious elite of that time, they had added on to the laws of God things that weren't even scriptural, things that weren't even biblical.

But these are the things that these Jews were depending upon. But it says in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk. John here is describing the people that are laying around on these five

porches right near the sheep market or the sheep gate here and this pool at Bethesda.

[10:09] But really and truly, this gives a really good description of the state that Israel was in at this time because their religion had become empty.

There was no God in it. They were doing it as a formality. They were doing it just because they felt like that's what they had to do. Kind of like some people go to church on Sunday because that's what they do on Sundays. They don't go to worship God.

They don't go to hear the word of God preach. They don't go to glorify God. They go to church because that's all they've done for 40 years. That's all that they know to do on Sundays. That is empty religion when that happens.

John here is describing, given a physical description of these folks that are laying around the pool at Bethesda, but really he is describing the state that Israel was in at the time when he says there was a multitude of impotent folk of blind, haught, withered, waiting for a movement of the water and that's all these people were doing. They were going through their ceremonies.

They might sing their songs going up to the temple. They might sing their songs of degrees while they were doing that. They might take their sin offerings. They might take their trespass offerings. They might consult with a rabbi or they might consult with a priest or a scribe about the scriptures or whatever it was.

[11:30] But ultimately they were hanging around an empty religion waiting on something. They were waiting for Messiah. The Jews were waiting for Messiah. Just like Jews nowadays are still waiting on Messiah.

Even though Messiah came 2,000 years ago, when you see these videos over there where it shows the Jews what's called the wailing wall now, and you see them pushing those little pieces of paper into the cracks in the wailing wall, those papers that they're pushing into those cracks are little prayers that they are jamming into the cracks praying that God sends Messiah like he has promised to.

Folks, God has already sent Messiah. God has sent Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ being God himself manifests in the flesh. He's already come. He's already ascended and he's going to come back one of these days after a while.

But these folks were sitting around. They were halted. They were maimed. They were impotent. What does it mean to be these things? They were halted and they were impotent. They were useless to society for one. And that's how these people would have felt.

I'm not saying that people nowadays who are crippled are useless, but that's how these people were. All they did was hang around this pool waiting for a stirring of the water.

[12:52] And that's all the Jews were doing was hanging around waiting on Messiah, but not doing anything to glorify God in the meantime. The church is very guilty. The church as a whole is very guilty of doing the exact same thing nowadays.

They just sit around and they wait on the second advent or the second coming of Jesus Christ. And they're not doing anything to the glory of God in the meantime. And that's a dangerous and a bad spot for the church to be in.

Verse 4, For an angel went down to a certain season into the pool and troubled the water.

Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And John in the previous verse had described some of the diseases and some of the handicaps that these people had. Impotent and blind and halted that the things that were wrong with these people.

Now we understand because of verse 4 why they were waiting by this pool. It says that an angel went down in a certain season and troubled the water. Now what exactly this means? I'm not real positive. Was it an actual angel? Was it just a troubling of the water?

[14:09] I mean this pool wouldn't have been something that they would have just carried water to from a separate place and dumped the water in. It would have had to have been fed by something by a stream or somehow or another.

So it seems to me like the water would have constantly had ripples in it. But I can promise you one thing. If it actually was an angel that troubled these waters, it was not an angel of God that done so. Because it says that these people hung around the sides of this pool waiting on the water to be troubled. And the first one in is the one that was healed of their disease.

I don't think that was of God at all if that's actually what was going on. If there was actually an angel that was troubling the water, I don't think it was of God. I don't think it was a godly angel that was doing that.

Because that would cause discord among all these people that were hanging around this pool. They would be fighting each other if they were able. They would be clawing each other if they were able. They'd be kicking, they'd be biting, they'd be doing whatever they could to make sure they were the first ones in the water.

[15:12] So if it indeed was an actual angel, I don't believe it was an angel from above that was doing this. But as I said before, some of the English translations don't even have verse 4 in them.

But some scribe at some point wrote it in the margin of some of the text. And that's why we have it as an explanation as to why all these people were hanging around this pool.

But it says, whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was Bate Hove.

Whatsoever disease he had, so whether it was blindness or whether it was a withered hand, whatever the case was, whoever the first one in the water was, was healed of whatsoever disease that they had.

And a certain man was there which had an infirmity, 38 years. We don't have a name for this man. The Holy Spirit didn't inspire John to give us a name. However, he did inspire John to give us an exact amount of years that this man had an infirmity.

38 years, which is a very odd number in the Scriptures. Most numbers that we see, they're pretty much cut and dry like the number 3 or the number 12 or the number 40 or something along those lines.

[16:31] But here we have 38. And unfortunately, I really can't tell you in Biblical numerology what the number 38 means. But I can tell you what I think the illusion is here that the Holy Spirit was trying to get across.

It says this man, a certain man, had had this infirmity for 38 years. What's significant about this? Jesus Christ just came into town, just came into Jerusalem by the sheep gate or by the sheep market, as the Scripture says, to this pool that had five porches on it, five being the number of favor and mercy.

And he's coming to this man who had had an infirmity for 38 years. What's significant about this 38 years? 38 years is the exact number of years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness after they received the law.

Exactly. Don't take Spencer's word for it. Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 2 and you will read it there. 38 years is exactly how long after they received the law that they spent in the wilderness.

I'm not saying that's how long they spent before they crossed into promised land, but it's how long they spent in the wilderness. Because remember, before they entered the promised land, they were camped out just outside of it for quite some time.

[18:00] But Deuteronomy chapter 2 tells us it was 38 years after receiving the law. This man here, this certain man that the Scripture talks about, was under this bondage, whatever it was, for 38 years. Personally, I don't believe this man was 38 years old.

I think he was a little bit older than that. And a little bit later in this account, you'll see why, because after he's healed and Jesus finds him in the temple, which is where the man should have been, he tells him to sin no more, unless the worst thing come upon him.

So was his ailment here, was this infirmity that he had, a direct result of some sin that he had committed?

Was he doing something he shouldn't have been and got crippled in the process? Was he a peeping tom and fell out of a tree while doing so? I have no idea. And you don't either. And the Bible does not tell us what it was, but Jesus does come to the man later on in the account and tells him to sin no more, unless the worst thing come upon him.

But we do know that this man had this ailment, this infirmity for 38 years. And that's the exact amount of time that Israel was wandering around the wilderness under the law.

[19:20] But praise God, grace came in. Grace was here with this man at this time. And folks, grace blows the law out the windows.

Now, does that mean that because I'm under grace, I can just go out here and, you know, the proverbial license to sin that we've heard about so many times. I've got a license to break all the laws that God gives us.

That's absolutely not. That's not what that means. But folks, communion with God, relationship with God, no longer depends on my keeping of the law. It depends on grace. And it depends on grace for you.

It is grace that Jesus Christ came to this man this day. It says that there are all kinds of people hanging around this pool around Bethesda. All kinds of impotent folk, halt, maimed, and all kinds of things wrong with him.

But Jesus Christ, in his sovereignty, and this account points out the sovereignty of God, passed by all those other folks there. I don't know if there was anybody that was in worse shape than this man was or not, but there were other people there that had needs of their own.

[ 20 : 34 ] And Christ passed by each one of those to go to this certain man that had an infirmity for 38 years. Verse 6, when Jesus saw him lie and knew that he had now been a long time in that case he saith unto him, will thou be made whole? And we read that, I read that, and I think, what a ridiculous question.

Will thou be made whole? Do you want to be well, in other words? Do you want to be able to do for yourself? Do you want rid of this infirmity that you have? And honestly, I think to myself, what a silly question to ask anybody, but folks, Jesus, if you're sitting here saved this morning, Jesus asked everyone of us the same question.

He put everyone of us underneath the same microscope, with the same spotlight on every one of us at some time if you were sitting here and you were born again this morning. Will thou be made whole? Do you want to be well? Do you want to be rescued? Do you want to be saved?

This also goes to serve that Jesus does not push himself on people. Jesus won't force people to be saved. There's a decision that's got to be made on the human side of this thing, not to say that we have anything to do with our salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, period.

I can't save me and you can't save me and I can't save you. It's by grace through faith. But he asked this question, will thou be made whole? But it says, Jesus saw him. He saw him lie there.

[ 22 : 10 ] Manages laying there, and that's all that he could do. We don't know if he laid there 24-7. We don't know if maybe in the morning he had relatives or he had friends or he paid people to pick him up every morning and carry him to this pool and leave him laying there. But the man was unable to do for himself.

Just like I was unable to do for myself before grace stepped in on the scene. I couldn't save myself. I couldn't give myself grace. You couldn't give me grace and you surely couldn't give me salvation and I couldn't do it either. But Jesus asked the question, will thou be made whole?

Verse 7, verse 7 is actually the saddest verse in all of this. From John 5-1 to John 5-18, verse 7 is the sad verse. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I had no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool.

But while I am coming, another stepped down before me. Jesus just asked him, will thou be made whole? Do you want to be well? Do you want to be made better?

And how does this man answer? The same way I answered for years before I got saved. Very likely the same way you answered for years before you got saved.

[ 23 : 28 ] I'm trying to do it. I'm putting forth my best effort. But nobody's around to help me. He's focusing on himself and he's focusing on his fellow man.

And he's dependent on those two things to make him well, to get him to a spot that he needs to be at, to be made well.

He says, Sir, I have no man. Folks, we don't need a man when it comes to salvation. We need the Lord Jesus Christ when it comes to salvation. I didn't need a preacher to save me. When I got saved, there wasn't a preacher for miles around to my knowledge.

There wasn't a Baptist anywhere around. There wasn't a Methodist anywhere around. No Presbyterians. It was me and God alone in a room.

And this man here, he says, I have no man. I'm glad I wasn't dependent on a man either to save me. A man to get me there. A man to get me into contact with Jesus Christ.

[ 24 : 35 ] The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man. When the water is troubled, to put me into the pool. But he says, when I'm coming, now this man was impotent, meaning he had no strength.

He had no strength to do for himself. He was just laying there on his bed as the scripture says. More than likely it was a little cot that was able to be rolled up.

But either way, he's just laying there on this mat. He says, when the water is troubled, I have no man to put me in there. Nobody can help me.

I can't help but wonder what Jesus thought. That's not what I asked you. I didn't ask you if you had a man. I didn't ask you if you had a way to get to the water. I asked you if you wanted to be well. How many times does Christ look down on us as children of God? And we go to Him with something that's been bothering us or something that was actually taken care of a month ago.

[ 25 : 41 ] But we're still praying about it. We're still saying, well, you've done this or you've done that. But I really did this tweak just a little bit. And here's to God looking down on His children.

And I've already done that for you. Or that's not my plan. Or whatever the case is. This is the way we're going. This is the direction we're going. Jesus asked him a very simple question.

Will God be made old? And this man, this impotent man, gives an answer focusing on his fellow man and focusing on himself. I have no man to put me in the water.

I can't do it. And when I'm making my way there, however he was doing it, I don't know if he was impotent from the waist down or what the case was. But either way, he was making an effort of some kind to get to that water.

But these people that were blind, I'd say they had a pretty good sense of what direction to run just to fall into the water. And these people that had withered appendages or withered hands or feet or legs or whatever the case was, even if it was one leg that was withered, they still had another one they could hop on.

[ 26 : 51 ] Either way, they had their own ways and their own means to get to this water. And this guy says, when the water is troubled, I can't get there. Somebody gets in the water before I can.

And remember, Jesus came to this man individually. And he's around all these other folks and asked the question, will that be made whole? And this was the answer to this man give. First say, Jesus sayeth unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk.

Folks, this is a wonderful picture of grace. Jesus didn't put him through the ringer. He didn't put him through an interrogation. He didn't do any of these things.

He asked the man, will that be made whole? The man answered, speaking of himself and his fellow man. But Jesus did not withhold grace from him because he answered wrongly.

Because he answered in a way that he shouldn't have. But you also got to figure, 38 years this man had been like this. And that's all he knew was his fellow man and himself.

[ 27 : 54 ] This man was at the end of his rope. He had come to the end of himself. He was laying there literally hopeless until hope itself walked in.

And hope itself helped him out. Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. There's three commandments here and there's one tiny little sentence that Jesus gave this man.

Rise, he tells the man, take up thy bed and walk. Three separate commands. And when grace comes in and salvation comes in, folks, the first commandment that we have is rise.

Why is that? Because the Bible teaches in Ephesians 2 that we are all dead and our trespasses in sin. Dead people don't walk around. Dead people either lay on the ground or lay under the ground. Either way, they have no capability of raising themselves up. This man was laying here impotent, no strength of his own. No way to do anything for himself.

[ 28 : 56 ] And Christ gives him the commandment to rise. And then he says, take up your bed.

Take up that mat that you've been laying on all this time. That was the only thing in the world that could have given this man any comfort whatsoever.

And all the comfort that he had from that was that he wasn't laying directly upon the ground. But he says, Rise, take up your bed and walk. He does the same thing with me when he saved me.

He said, Rise, maybe not take up your bed. They said, Rise and walk. In other words, go. That's a commandment in the Scripture that all of us as Christians have is to go.

We go into all the world. We preach the Gospel unto every living creature. We go in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We go for His glory. We go for His honor.

We go because it's a commandment from God that we go. And Christ told this man the same thing. Rise, take up your bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked.

[ 30 : 04 ] Immediately he done exactly what Jesus Christ told him to. And folks, that's the biggest problem. In my personal opinion that the church has today.

Is when we have commands of God, and we got a whole book of them here. We have commands of God and we don't follow them. And we wonder why the church is in the shape that it's in.

I'm not talking about free of gospel mission. I'm talking about the church, the body of Christ, the church as a whole. We wonder why it doesn't have any more power than it does. We wonder why the stories that we hear, you know, 50 and 75 years ago, people would drive by the church house on a revival night.

And the Holy Spirit of God would be so strong that it would draw the lost into the church. People would be parking their cars on the edge of the road, or sometimes tying their horses at the hitching post in front of the church.

And one of the cases was in going in because the drawing power of the Holy Spirit was so strong. And we wonder why we don't see that nowadays. I'll tell you why. It's because we don't follow the commandments of God like we should.

[ 31 : 16 ] This man here was told, rise, take up that bed and walk. And it says immediately he was made whole and took up his bed and walked. And on the same day was the Sabbath. He followed the commands of Jesus Christ.

I promise you, church, I promise you, if we follow the commands of Jesus Christ as we should, the power of God will be a whole lot stronger in our life. I may not be able to walk on water. I may not be able to heal lepers or heal the blind.

I may not be able to walk past people like Peter could and my very shadow healed them. But I promise you, if I follow the commands of Jesus Christ that are found in the pages of this book, the way that I should, I'll have a whole lot more power with God in my life.

This man here was healed completely. He was made whole. It doesn't say that he got up and stumbled around. It doesn't say he had to go to six weeks of physical therapy after the fact. It doesn't say anything along those lines.

He was made whole and he took up his bed and he walked. Never to need that mat again for the purpose that he had needed it for for 38 years.

[ 32 : 23 ] It says on the same day was the Sabbath and we ain't going to get into that this week. But unfortunately, when good things happen with God, there's always ridicule that comes along with it.

That's what the rest of that. The rest of this account is about all the way through verse 18. But we will end it right there.