

“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES

#8: “Healing in Galilee and Jerusalem”

SCRIPTURE: 4:46-5:17

INTRO:

Jesus has traveled from Sychar in Samaria back to Cana in Galilee where He performed His first miracle, the changing of the water into wine at a wedding.

WHILE IN GALILEE, HE HEALS AN OFFICIAL’S SON WHO WAS IN CAPERNAUM.

This is in verses 46 through 54 of chapter 4. He changed the water to wine in Cana, and when He went back there, a government official who heard about His miraculous power came from Capernaum to ask Him to come and heal his son, who was at death’s door.

Jesus’ initial comment was: ***“Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.”*** This was probably meant for the general public and not just for the man from Capernaum.

The man begged Jesus to come to Capernaum, but Jesus said to him, ***“Go; your son will live.”*** Amazingly, the man believed Him and headed back to Capernaum. Before he got there, his servants met him to tell him that his son was recovering. They told him: ***“Yesterday at the seventh hour (What time is that? One o’clock.) the fever left him,”*** which was exactly when Jesus told him that his son would live. Jesus healed from long distance! (I’d like to see today’s so-called healers do that!)

AFTER THIS, JESUS HEALED A MAN WHO HAD BEEN AN INVALID FOR THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS.

This is recorded in chapter 5, verses 1 through 16. Jesus was in Jerusalem earlier for Passover. Now, He’s in Jerusalem again for a ***“feast of the Jews.”*** What could that feast be? We don’t know. We’re not told, so it must not be important. So, I’m not going to concern myself with it. However, we do know that it was Saturday, the Sabbath.

Jesus approached an invalid who was one of many blind, lame, and paralyzed people who were lying under roofed colonnades near a pool of water. It was believed that as the water stirred from time to time, the first one into the pool when it stirred would be healed.

What do you think caused this stirring? Could it have been a spring-fed pool that stirred when water rushed into it from deep in the ground somewhere? I’ve known some pools of water like that in Missouri and right here in Arkansas.

Where do you think the idea came from that the pool had healing power? I think somewhere back down the line a paralytic or a blind person got better after having gotten into the pool, and their story grew into the belief we have here. Stuff like this happens even today. There are people who believe in the healing power of shrines, like the place where the young girl believed she encountered the Virgin Mary. People come to that site by the droves, seeking healing and other blessings.

You may have noticed, unless you are using a King James Version, that there is no verse 4 in this chapter; the text goes from verse 3 to verse 5. The King James includes a verse that was added somewhere along the line. It isn't in any of the oldest copies of the gospel of John that we have, so it probably wasn't in the original. Some well-meaning scribe apparently felt that some further explanation was needed, so he added: *"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."*

This man, however, had no one to assist him, so he could never get to the pool in time. For 38 years, he had been an invalid. How long he had been beside the pool we don't know. But Jesus, who saw him lying there, knew that he'd been there a long time, so He said, *"Do you want to be healed?"* Not expecting Jesus to do anything about his situation, the man said, *"Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me."* At that, Jesus said, *"Get up, take up your bed, and walk."* And the man was immediately healed, got up, took up his bed, and walked.

But uh oh. Here comes the "Sabbath police." Completely ignoring the wonderful thing that had happened, the Jews complained, *"It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed."*

The healed man defended his action. *"The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"*

The Jews said, *"Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'"* He didn't know. Jesus hadn't identified Himself. Later, when Jesus told him that He was the one who healed him, the man went to the Jews and told them that Jesus had healed him.

So, from then on, the Jews persecuted Jesus because they considered Him a Sabbath-breaker.

Jesus' answer to their charge was, *"My Father is working until now, and I am working."* What, do you suppose, He meant by that? He was as much as saying, "Look, I'm just doing the things my Father does every day of the week."

But let me ask you another question: There were many people lying around that pool who were invalid and blind. Why didn't Jesus just heal them all? Paul Butler explains: "Miracles of the Bible are always connected inseparably with the gospel message. Neither Jesus nor the apostles healed primarily to relieve suffering. As R. C. Foster points out, the best way to show the unscriptural nature of modern faith-healers is to point to the fact that there are a great number of religious sects claiming to heal – yet they teach absolutely contradictory doctrines" (p.178).

Let's think about...

THE SUBJECT OF HEALING AND OTHER MIRACLES.

Jesus healed one man out of many who were gathered around the pool. During his ministry, He encountered hundreds – maybe thousands – who could have benefitted from His healing power, yet He and His apostles healed relatively few. What does this say about Him and the apostles? What does it say about today's so-called "healers"? What does it say about healing in general?

1. It clearly says that physical healing was not a priority of their ministry, and when it was done it was done in conjunction with the gospel message, in conjunction with convincing people that Jesus was, indeed, the Christ, the Son of God. The blessing that it brought was secondary.
2. The healing done by Jesus and the apostles was clearly instantaneous, and in some cases, remotely done in that the person healed was some distance away, never touched, and never seen. In the case of such healings, the miraculous nature is doubtless; there is no other explanation for what took place.
3. Many today believe that healing is for everyone through faith, which has no basis in New Testament Scripture. Our physical well-being is not God's priority, at least not in this life. While there's nothing wrong in praying for healing, we cannot expect God to give each of us the answer we want. Even suffering has its purpose.
4. My belief is that while God may still be in the miracle business, He performs them only when it suits his purpose, not necessarily ours.

Now that we've said all that, let's consider another question:

WHY DID JESUS HEAL THIS MAN?

Why pick this one? Why not one of the others? Why not heal them all? Let's think about it.

As I've already suggested, the healing Jesus and His apostles did was always connected to the gospel in that it was done to communicate the identity of Jesus – to help people see Jesus as the Son of God. So, if Jesus had healed all of the blind and invalid people lying around the pool, He, no doubt, would

have been declared Lord and King right on the spot. People would have followed Him in droves. But He didn't want that. There was quite a price to be paid as a disciple of Jesus, and He didn't want them to overlook it. He didn't want people to come to him just because He had power to work miracles.

But why choose this man instead of one of the others? I believe He chose him because He knew that he had no idea who Jesus was, and He knew how the man would respond. His response gave Jesus the opportunity to further establish His identity among the Jews.

IN CONCLUSION:

Next week we'll look at the rest of chapter 5 and Jesus' answer to the Jews who questioned His authority.