

## Text— John 5:1-15

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Prior to our sermon text, we learn of some success Jesus had when He spoke His Word among the Samaritans in the city of Sychar, for in John 4:39-42 we read, “many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” Thus, it is truly wonderful that there was a positive response to Jesus’ preaching by a sizeable number of Samaritans, for they were a mixed race of people who were generally despised by the Jews.

On the other hand, there were many Jews who continued to reject Jesus Christ no matter how frequently and how magnificently He preached, and no matter how many mighty miracles He did to prove who He is, for John 4:44 relates, “Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.” And, John 1:11 reports, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” Yes, Jesus was for the most part rejected by His own people, the Jews, even though, according to His human nature, He was of the house and lineage of David.

Nevertheless, despite being horribly mistreated, especially by the high-churchmen among the Jews, Jesus kept on preaching, teaching and performing miracles— all of which proved He is the Messiah foretold of old, the Christ, the promised Savior of the whole world.

Our sermon text supplies us with a case which again proves that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, the one true Savior of the world, for in our

Scripture selection we observe:

“JESUS HEALED AN IMPOTENT MAN”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What was the sad situation concerning an impotent man
- 2) How Jesus healed an impotent man
- 3) How the Jews reacted to the healed man
- 4) What Jesus subsequently said to the healed man

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Verse 1, ----- (John 5:1)

Immediately preceding our sermon text we learn that Jesus miraculously healed a nobleman’s son who had been sick at Capernaum. Jesus did not at that time go to Capernaum, but simply spoke His Word while yet at Cana of Galilee, telling the nobleman, “Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee”. (John 4:50-54) Then it happened, *After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

Verses 2-4, ----- (John 5:2-4)

During Jesus’ visible sojourn on earth, there was *at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.* So, in Jerusalem there was a place where sheep were gathered for sacrificial purposes, and in that area was the pool known as Bethesda, meaning “house of mercy”. We can relate

Bethesda to a hospital area, for the five porches provided infirm folks with resting places which had roofs for some protection from inclement weather.

Our sermon text also reports that on the five porches *lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.* Oh, quite a number of powerless people were lying around in those five porches. There were people without eyesight, cripples, lame, those with shrunken limbs and such. Those infirm folks waited for the water of the pool to agitate, *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.* Hence, God had not left Himself without witness as to His mercy and miraculous power, for one of His holy angels would stir-up the water; then, whoever got into the agitated pool first would be healed of his or her malady.

Verse 5, ----- (John 5:5)

The sad situation at the pool of Bethesda concerning one particular impotent man, was that he *had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*

Think about it. When we have a health problem for a few days or weeks or months, it bothers us greatly. But, the man in our text had suffered his affliction for 38 years, by the time Jesus visibly came on the scene.

Verses 6 & 7, ----- (John 5:6-7)

Jesus Christ is true God in addition to being true man, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9) Thus, Jesus knew the infirm man had been suffering for 38 years. So, upon seeing the man lying there, Jesus *saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 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.*

It's interesting to note that the man was respectful

to Jesus in that he addressed Jesus as "Sir". Nevertheless, it's also evident that the man did not know who Jesus was, as is reported later in the 13<sup>th</sup> verse of our sermon text.

The impotent man could never make it into the pool of Bethesda first when the waters were agitated, because no one would transport him and place him into the water before another person got into the pool; consequently, the impotent man never got the chance to receive the cure which was available only to the first person who got into the water when it was troubled. Furthermore, the man did not yet know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior from sin. Such was the sad situation concerning an impotent man.

My friends, a sad situation is the case concerning every naturally conceived human being, for Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23 inform us, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [and] the wages of sin is death; [that's both temporal and never-ending death in hell] but [and thank God for that "but"] the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Jesus is our Deliverer from doom! We can never make it to heaven without Jesus Christ!

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see how Jesus healed an impotent man.

Verses 8 & 9, ----- (John 5:8-9)

Jesus had shown He cared about the man who had an infirmity for 38 years, for Jesus had asked the man, *Wilt thou be made whole?* The man then told Jesus that he could never get into the pool of Bethesda first when the water was troubled, but someone else would always step down before him.

What the impotent man failed to realize is that Jesus Christ – who is true God and true man, the one true Savior of the world – was right then and there addressing him. But thankfully, Jesus showed the man His divine power, for *Jesus saith unto him,*

*Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked. Amazingly, the cure was instantaneous and complete! The man obeyed Jesus' Word, not yet fully knowing who Jesus is, but knowing Jesus cured him by almighty power. Incidentally, the same day was the sabbath.*

Now, years ago I heard about a so-called "faith healer" who called upon people with various illnesses to come forward to the stage from which he was speaking; and, when one woman who could hardly walk got up on that stage, he whacked her on the forehead and said 'be healed'; then, when she was not healed by his action, he told her she remained infirm because she did not have enough faith. Can you imagine how that woman felt? I hope she realized the guy was a phoney, a false prophet; I hope she sincerely repented of her sins and came to know Jesus Christ as her personal Savior and Lord.

Looking at verses 1-9 of our sermon text, note well that we are never told that the man Jesus healed had faith. Up to that point in time, the man did not yet know who Jesus was and is. Accordingly, JESUS HEALED THE IMPOTENT MAN BY SIMPLY SPEAKING HIS WORD, for JESUS' WORD IS THE POWERFUL WORD OF GOD!

Likewise, Jesus heals spiritually impotent folks – which we ALL are by nature – by means of His powerful Word, through which He grants us faith in Him, the very faith which personally receives the forgiveness of sins and salvation which He earned for all people by His perfect life and atoning death on the cross, for Holy Writ tells us, "the gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:

it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Romans 1:16-17; 10:17; John 3:36; Ephesians 2:8-9)

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see how the Jews reacted to the healed man.

Verse 10, ----- (John 5:10)

The cured man was carrying his bed, as Jesus had instructed him to do when He cured him. Were the Jews happy that the man who had suffered for 38 years was cured of his infirmity? No! Instead, the *Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.* Oh, the man was carrying his bed. So, the Jews in their phoney sanctimoniousness had the gall to accuse the man of breaking the law.

Yes, the Jews distorted God's Commandment, adding to it and putting their own spin on it. We read in Exodus 20:8-11 & 34:21, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in eaning time and in harvest thou shalt rest." Accordingly, it's plainly evident that among the Jews of the Old Testament, one's normal employment labors were to be ceased on the Sabbath day. The commandment did not forbid the Jews from all eating, drinking, walking and so forth.

The Pharisees and company among the Jews put their own spin on the commandment, adding restrictions of their own invention, while excusing the activities they themselves did on the Sabbath day.

For example, Jesus was once accused of breaking the Sabbath because He healed a woman, “which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” (Luke 13:11-16) So, we note that when the legalistic Jews loosed their beasts from a stall to lead them to water, such activity – in their view – was not a breaking of the Sabbath law; but, when Jesus helped a human being, such was held by those same Jews to be a violation of the Sabbath law!

My friends, the truth which must be remembered by ALL of us is, as we read in Romans 13:10, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Hence, Jesus’ helping people on the Sabbath day was certainly NOT a violation of God’s Law, but was rather a fulfilling of God’s Law.

Thus, the Jews’ reaction to the formerly impotent man in our text was unloving, totally uncalled for, mean spirited and sinful.

Verses 11-13, ----- (John 5:11-13)

Observe that the healed man testified to the Jews which accused him of breaking the Sabbath law. The formerly impotent man, *answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.* Oh, the man did not yet

know Jesus by name, but he did know that Jesus had miraculously healed him; so, the man, when he took up his bed and walked, rightly obeyed Jesus.

Did the Jews then ask the man to describe in detail how he had suffered and how he was healed? No! They were still stuck on their own twisted version of a commandment of God, a commandment they had perverted, for they asked the formerly impotent man, saying, *What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?* Then we learn, *he that was healed* knew not *who* the man who had healed him *was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place*

So, the formerly impotent man could not point Jesus out to the enquiring Jews, since Jesus had moved away into the crowd of people; and, the man did not know Jesus by name, even though he knew he had been miraculously healed by Him.

Hence, the Jews reacted to the formerly impotent man, not with love and happiness for the man’s being healed; not with thanks to God for the man’s being healed; but rather, with disapproval of the man carrying his bed on the Sabbath, as if the man had actually broken a commandment of God, when the truth is that the man simply went against the Jews perverted version of the commandment.

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see what Jesus subsequently said to the healed man.

Verses 14 & 15, ----- (John 5:14-15)

It’s good to see that the healed man was in the temple. The guy did not head to the local tavern to celebrate; no, the man went to God’s house, for *Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Jesus’ words indicate the man’s former infirmity

was perhaps a result of some sinful practice the man had been involved in, for Jesus warned him, saying, *thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* Oh, sin brings all sorts of problems upon the sinner.

My friends, we too can bring physical, mental and spiritual troubles upon ourselves by sinning; so, we had best avoid all deliberate, wilful sinning.

We need to heed the following words from Hebrews 10:23-31, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." God grant that we cling to Christ Jesus in sincere faith.

Looking at the last verse of our text, we note that after Jesus gave words of warning to the healed man, *The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.* Thus, the man testified to the Jews concerning Jesus Christ: that Jesus is the man who miraculously healed him of his infirmity. Observe that the man emphasized to the Jews the miracle which Jesus worked upon him in making him whole, for that was the important thing that had taken place. The man confessed Jesus. So, the formerly impotent man

had now certainly come to faith in Jesus, which truly made him whole, complete, both physically and spiritually.

As we've considered the fact that Jesus healed an impotent man, we've been reminded that Jesus is true God in addition to true man. We've seen that Jesus is the Christ, our one true Savior and Lord.

Therefore, let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. And, let us go forward endeavoring to show our thanks to our Savior by striving to be fruitful in the faith, shunning sin. Amen.

m.e.l.