

Devotion on the Miracles of Christ (Pool at Bethesda) - 6 February 2014, Anno Domini
(In the Year of our Lord)



1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 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. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, 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.** 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: 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. 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, **Take up thy bed, and walk.** 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. 14 Afterward 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.** 15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. (John 5:1-16)

Jesus has gone up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Jews. This feast is considered, by most traditional Bible scholars, to have been the Passover. I concur in the view of these. That feast must surely have been the Passover. It is very appropriate that He be present at EVERY Passover, for He has become our Great Passover and the Lamb Without Blemish slain on the Eve of His last Passover on earth. The sheep market was just outside the gate of the Sheep Gate referred to in Nehemiah 3:1. It is altogether

appropriate that Christ should come to that Gate on the eastern walls of Jerusalem for He is our Lamb of Sacrifice and the Sun of righteousness which shall arise (from the East) with "*Healing in His wings.*" (Malachi 4:2) Moreover, it is a lovely place to which He has come (the Pool of Bethesda) which, interpreted, means **House of Mercy**. Christ, thanks be to God, is our Bethesda – our House and Ark of Mercy. When we come to this pool for the healing of our souls, the moment of our visitation and healing is altogether dependent on the discretion of Heaven and not our own. We patiently await the movement of God in the things we need for His timing will always be the perfect moment to answer our prayers.

"After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Christ "went up to Jerusalem" to this Passover. If we will go up to the Passover of our souls, we must arise from our common labors and be about – not our own devices and pleasures – but the work of our Father in Heaven. The direction to the Narrow Gate is always upward.

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 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." The Lamb of God comes to this sheep market place. You and I were these sheep without a shepherd until that Lamb came to us, knowing our hurts and needs as One like unto us, and became the Great Shepherd of His sheep. We waited alone in the market place, being bought and sold by men, until Christ came and laid claim to His sheep. There at the Sheep Gate, though a place of barter of souls, yet there is also a House of Mercy (Bethesda) into which we may run as shelter from having our souls sold out by the world. But we enter that House on the terms of God and not on those of our own making. *"...whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."* Do you not find great consolation in the term "whosoever?" We know immediately that 'whosoever' can mean you and me as well. All we need do is come to the House of Mercy and wait upon the provision of God to heal all our wounds.

Now comes another term that is different from that of 'whosoever' for it points to a definite identity: the word here that I love is 'certain.' *"And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years."* This is no 'certain man' by accident, but a certain man whom Christ has come to visit by His own choice – just like you and me who have been blessed to encounter Christ as His 'certain men and women, boys and girls.' We are often surprised by the appearance of Jesus at the threshold of our hearts. We laid our souls by the House of Mercy and at our Time of visitation, He came to us. Now, to know this beautiful truth beautiful truth fills my heart with a burning love and gratitude to that Dispenser of Pure Grace called My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Though our souls feel to be at the very center of the Wilderness as was poor Hagar, the Lord sees us. She called the Fountain where the Angel of the Lord found her, *The Well Of The Living One Who Sees Me* (Beerlahairoi). (Gen 16:13-14) What beautiful strokes of vivid color does the Master paint upon the canvas of our lives? *"When Jesus saw him lie"* yes, and not just at this moment, but for all the years of the man's misery!

*"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?**"* Is this not a very simple question,

and does it need an answer? Yes, even though it is the greatest desire of the afflicted man, he MUST answer this question just as you and I must answer it for the healing of our souls. Being made whole is much more than a healing of our physical ailments, but wholeness in body, soul, and spirit. Our most grievous affliction is our sin before God. It is this affliction that will bring not only physical death, but eternal death without the Grace and Mercy of God.

Of course the man desires to be made whole, but there is help forthcoming from none other than Christ. The healing of the leprosy of sin cannot be healed by man. "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." Many times even the disciples tried to step in between Christ and those wanting mercy, but Christ would not allow it. He suffered the little children to come unto Him, the blind Bartemeus, and the woman from the coast of Tyre and Sidon over the objections of those closest to Him. No man can prevent our access to Christ! Another important point is that NO MAN can help us – Salvation is of the LORD!

"Jesus saith unto him, **Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.**" Why wallow in our misery while Christ is near? Why slumber on the water's edge when the Water of Life stands at the ready to lift us in? It is not a request that we rise up and walk, but a command! If we possess the sure mercies of David, why linger fasting in the Wilderness. We should not only walk where we were unable in times past, but carry our beds as well in doing good and serving others. And to what result? "And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath." Don't we see that this poor man, though carrying his bed, had complete rest on this Sabbath Day? His Eternal Sabbath was realized in Christ!

Guess who is watching and burning in wrath and malice? "The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, **Take up thy bed, and walk.**" These men were more concerned about prying particulars than they were about life and healing and truth – as always. This man answers that he cares not about the violation of one of their onerous mandates, but he does care that the Lord has healed him.

"Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, **Take up thy bed, and walk?** And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place." Jesus may not choose to reveal Himself to us in the crowds, but in a place apart. It is not the influence of the multitudes that bring us to Christ, but Christ Himself. "Afterward 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.**" After finding our wounded persons on the Road to Jericho, and healing us to wholeness, the Lord next finds us in His holy Temple which is the heart in which He resides. He will most often reveal Himself to us behind those closed chambers of our hearts. His counsel to the man to "sin no more" is ample evidence that the man was forgiven his sins as well as healed physically.

The man now understands the depth of his healing because he has come to know the greatness of his Redeemer. "The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day." Please note that it was the crippled man who carried his bed on the Sabbath – not Christ. It is for the goodness of His healing the desperate cripple alone that prompt these murderous

vultures to desire to kill Christ.

My friend, if you have been found by the wayside of the traffic of life by the loving Savior, have you heard His voice and responded to His invitation. "***Wilt thou be made whole?***" If so, why linger beside the pool at Bethesda without getting up? Why not take up your former prison (bed), and walk as a new creature in Him who has made you whole? Do so today!