

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda – The Power Over Time

John 5:1-15

Introduction

1. During an undisclosed feast in Jerusalem, Jesus performed His 3rd miracle recorded in the gospel of John.
 2. The healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda displays Jesus' power over time.
 3. Time is an undefeated foe, and at the same time a vanishing friend – we are caught in a constant loop of time found, given, lost, stolen, wasted, etc.
 4. Jesus is the only solution to the problems time presents.
- I. The Miracle
- A. The Setting **(vv. 1-4, 7)**
 - a. **(vv. 2-3)** – 5 porches at Pool of Bethesda full of the sick, blind, lame and paralyzed.
 - i. This seems to describe a regular scene.
 - ii. This place is known, and is where the sick go, or are brought.
 - iii. Just why Jesus went to this place when He came to the city for a feast is not directly stated but is known from His later words – **(v. 17) (cf. 9:4-5)** – His work was among the needy, pitiful, ignorant, and lost.
 1. He seeks to save while the rulers seek to condemn **(v. 10)**.
 - b. **(vv. 4, 7)** – the tradition seems to be a scribal interpolation, but there is implication from **verse 7** that it was likely, or something similar to it.
 - i. What were they doing? – **“waiting”** – allowing time to pass, anticipating, yet without any apparent change.
 1. It is thought that a spring intermittently fed the pool, agitating the surface.
 2. There is no indication that the water ever healed anyone.
 - ii. **(v. 7)** – this response to Jesus' inquiry is pregnant with helplessness, frustration, and wasted time – he spends his time waiting only to fail to get to the pool in time.
 - B. The Inquiry **(vv. 5-6)**
 - a. **(v. 5)** – 38 years – in all those years, how often had he come to the pool to wait for an opportunity to be healed? How many times had he failed of hope and decided not to go?
 - b. **(v. 6)** – why does Jesus ask this question?
 - i. **“When Jesus saw him...and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said...”**
 - ii. It seems His question is directly related to His knowledge of the length of time the man had the infirmity and perhaps had gone to the pool to wait.
 - iii. We cannot presume to know of any implication the question had in relation to the man's state of mind – complacent in his state, pessimistic, etc.

1. If anything, his presence at the pool seems to indicate he does want to be made well.
 - iv. **“The question of Jesus also contains a promise of help.”**
(HENDRIKSEN-KISTEMAKER)
 - C. The Miracle **(vv. 8-13)**
 - a. **(vv. 8-9)** – once again, Jesus healed by the power of His divine word, and being healed, the man obeyed the word.
 - i. **Immediately** – 38 years of dealing with an infirmity, unrevealed time of waiting for healing that wouldn’t come, all eclipsed by the immediacy of the miracle.
 - b. **(vv. 10-13)** – the Jewish rulers, blinded by their love of tradition, failed to see the glory of God.
 - D. The Warning **(v. 14)**
 - a. Jesus once again shows His greater focus – **2:4; 4:48** – His purpose is to incite such faith that leads men out of the darkness of sin and ignorance into the light of righteousness and truth.
 - b. As He knew with the Samaritan woman, Jesus knew the sins of this man – **“Sin NO MORE”**
 - c. There was something worse than physical malady that awaited the spiritually rebellious – **cf. Luke 13:5** – **not 38 years, but eternity.**
- II. Jesus Has Power Over Time
- A. Jesus Disrupts Tradition with Timeless Truth
 - a. The miracle itself, and the circumstances under which it took place, stands as a microcosm of the greater contrast between Jesus and the Jewish establishment.
 - i. **John 5:10** – **“it is not lawful”** is not accurate.
 - ii. Their problem had to do with their tradition, which was wrapped up in self-aggrandizement – **John 5:41-44; cf. Matthew 23:4-5**
 - iii. **John 5:4, 7-9** – the tradition joined to the pool was impotent, and meaningless, but the truth set the man free from his condition.
 1. Their traditions would not save them, only the truth would – **John 8:31-32**
 - b. Christ demands that we leave the traditions of man for the eternal truth of God – **Matthew 15:3-5**
 - i. **(v. 4)** – **“God commanded”** – past tense
 - ii. **(v. 5)** – **“But you say”** – present tense
 - iii. Their present traditions contradict the past commands – the result? – **(vv. 13-14)**
 - c. Some appeal to time to validate their practices, but eternity trumps all – **1 Corinthians 2:7, 10-12** – if it is not the wisdom ordained before the ages, and revealed through the Spirit, then it is not valid.
 - B. Jesus Disrupts Time Spent in Sin
 - a. Jesus’ admonition – **(v. 14)** – **“Sin no more”** – Verb, Present, Active, Imperative – **“Stop sinning” (NIV)**

- i. This does not imply that his sin is the cause of his infirmity – **cf. 9:2-3**
 - ii. **However, it does show Jesus' knowledge of the man's current spiritual condition, and his "walk" in sin – continuous, character, manner of life.**
 - b. Many today come to Jesus to hear Him say, **"See, you have been made well,"** but they have no interest in hearing the rest, **"Stop sinning."**
 - c. True, full encounters with Jesus are arresting, stopping us in our sinful tracks, provoking shame – **Luke 5:8** (Peter); **Isaiah 6:5** (**cf. John 12:41** – i.e. Jesus' glory)
 - d. When we face the truth of Christ, it is always "enough," and time to follow Him fully – **1 Peter 4:1-3; Ephesians 4:17, 22-24**
 - e. If we make a full break from sin, the Lord promises us that ALL that time spent walking in sin will be remembered no more – **Ezekiel 18:21-23** – by the grace of God that time is erased.
- C. Jesus Disrupts Time with a Message of Hope
 - a. **(v. 5)** – "Whether thirty-eight minutes or thirty-eight years, the time made no difference. Jesus is the master of time." (Hailey, Homer, *That You May Believe*, 111)
 - b. **(v. 6)** – For 38 years the man had dealt with the infirmity. How many times had he come to the pool, only for disappointment? How long had he dreamt of a day where he would make it to the water and be made well?
 - i. How many had come to offer help? How many had passed by? How many sat around him with similar circumstances, grasping for hope, yet finding nothing?
 - ii. Jesus does not taunt the man but inspires hope – He becomes a light at the end of the 38-year long tunnel.
 - c. Time continues to tell the same story – **Ecclesiastes 1:2, 9-11** – vanity – **Ecclesiastes 9:2-3** – grim without God.
 - d. Jesus disrupted time with hope – **Matthew 4:12-17** – the darkness of time was penetrated by the light of eternity.
 - e. How long have we labored? Jesus invites us to rest – **Matthew 11:28-30**
 - f. Yet, hope involves patience and perseverance in the passing of time – **Romans 8:24-25**
 - g. Jesus, the creator of time, will come again to end it, and give us what is due – **John 5:28-29** – let us use our time to do good, that we may have eternal life by His grace.

Conclusion

1. While time cannot be bought back or revered, and is in no way promised to us, we can have certainty in coming to the Lord of time.
2. Jesus demands that we stop wasting time in sin and take hold of His offer of eternity.