

Unexpected Mercy

“Learning Jesus” (The Gospel of John)
John 5:2-9

February 17, 2019

BIG IDEA

Today we'll experience a miracle that shows the specific pursuit of Jesus in the life of a man that was dealing with long-term challenges and suffering. Jesus singles him out and gives him incredible and unexpected mercy. God desires for each one of us to know this unexpected mercy in our own lives, and the invitation for you today is to receive it and walk in that mercy.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

This is the third of seven signs that Jesus did in order to prove that He is who He said He is.

The Seven Signs

- Changing water into wine at the wedding at Cana ([Jn. 2:1-11](#))
- Healing the royal official's son ([Jn. 4:46-54](#))
- *Healing the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem* ([Jn. 5:1-15](#))
- Feeding the 5,000 ([Jn. 6:5-13](#))
- Walking on water ([Jn. 6:16-21](#))
- Healing the man born blind ([Jn. 9:1-7](#))
- Raising Lazarus from the dead ([Jn. 11:1-44](#))

The pool of Bethesda is located just inside the Sheep Gate on the eastern side of the old city of Jerusalem, and that is where we enter into this sign of Jesus.

John 5:2-9a

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. ³In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. *
⁵One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him

lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” ⁷The sick man answered him, “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.” ⁸Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

**Verse 4 is not included in some manuscripts.*

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. The Scene

John 5:2-3 – *Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. ³In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.*

The verses describe five colonnaded porches or “five roofed colonnades,” which speak to the size of the area. In modern-day terms it is estimated at 1.5 football fields long and half of a football field wide.

Get ahold of the fact that Jesus didn’t focus His attention on all the people around the temple, nor did He pursue the high-flyers of the day by seeking after the financial elites or political influencers specifically. He focused on people in need which was hard for many to understand. Why would He not be coming up to me to in some way benefit from what I have to offer him?

- a. **Often times we struggle to see the needs of others because we can be so wrapped up in our own world. Can you share a time when you were so focused on yourself that you know you missed the opportunity to enter into someone’s world?**

- b. **What areas of your life might God be challenging you to change so that you can be more present for others?**



2. The Sickness

John 5:5-6 – *One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?”*

The passage tells us that the man was there because he was an invalid...he had a sickness or weakness that was keeping him there. The Greek word speaks of a “disability or weakness due to natural limitations”. We are not given understanding on whether the man was born with this condition or what exactly he was dealing with, but we know the amount of time that he was dealing with this was 38 years.

- a. **The man was desperate. He didn’t completely understand Jesus, yet the Lord sought him out. What does this say about Jesus’ compassion towards those that are hurting?**

- b. **Can you share a time when someone sought you out to encourage and lift you up?**

- c. **Read Romans 5:12** – *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...*

Based on that verse, why do you think it is hard for people accept their sinful state? Are there areas in your life in which you are having a hard time accepting your need for a Savior?



3. The Savior

John 5:7-9 – *The sick man answered him, “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.”* ⁸ *Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.”*⁹ *And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.*

“Do you want to be healed?” seems to the casual reader to just be ridiculous. But the man’s response is every bit as strange. He offers a telling of why it hasn’t happened for him yet. He is pointing to the circumstances and the hope of what externals can bring to him. He knows his need, but is anchoring to worldly wisdom above everything else. The only hope the man had to cling to was the pool.

- a. **Sometimes we can try to make other things a functional savior in our life when we trust more in stuff, people, or circumstances like the man at the pool was doing. Can you share an example of where you have done that yourself?**

- b. **What steps have you taken to draw your attention more to Christ than to the world?**

- c. **Where is hope lacking in your life? How can you rest more in Jesus?**

- d. **Close your time by reading Romans 5:2-5 together and embrace the hope God has already provided for you in Jesus.**

Romans 5:2-5 – *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* ³ *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,* ⁴ *and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,* ⁵ *and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*



PRAY

Dear Lord, you are an amazing healer. Thank you for invading my life and bringing change through your unexpected mercy. Please renew in me a hope for the future that rests on my confidence in Christ and not in my own strength or circumstances. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [Lord, Help Me to Endure One More Day](#) – a blog post from Desiring God
- [Walking with God through Pain and Suffering](#) – a book from Timothy Keller

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Seven Signs Point to Jesus as Son of God; Sign #4 – *Feeding of the Five Thousand* (John 6:5-13)

