

Wilt Thou Be?

John 5:1-18



Rock Hill Baptist Church

605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Brother David Buffaloe
731-845-6104

online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Read Responsively John 5:1-18 KJV "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, Wilt thou be made whole? {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. {17} But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. {18} Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

I hardly know where to start with the preaching of this text, there are so many wonderful truths in it. Our Lord Jesus went to Jerusalem to worship God during a certain **feast**. Now scholars really don't know what feast this was - and I guess which feast it was really isn't that important to what we're about to see. It's important that we understand that the *feasts* were established by the Law of God in Leviticus chapter 23:

Leviticus 23:4 NIV " 'These are the LORD's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times"

These were not just *eatin' meetin's* like when we have *dinner on the grounds*.

Feasts were *solemn sacred assemblies* that commemorated some wonderful way that the Lord *had saved* His people, or *was going to save* Israel.

Since these feasts commemorated *some aspect of salvation through God's Divine Intervention* the feasts were generally *started* and *ended* with a special sabbath -

a day where no work was allowed. God introduced His feasts with a reiteration of the fourth commandment prohibiting work on the Sabbath:

Leviticus 23:3 NIV " 'There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD. "

showing every one of His people that - just as it was a violation of the *fourth commandment* to work on the Sabbath, it was equally a violation to work on either the first or last days of His feasts.

His people were to *work at worshipping God* at the beginning and end of the feasts. Their attention was to be on Him, not on themselves. It was a holy time, just as holy as it is this morning as our attention turns to Jesus and what He did at this pool called **Bethesda**.

1. You Cannot Heal Yourself

FOCAL John 5:1-2 KJV "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 Bethesda¹, having five porches².

1 G964 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries) Βηθεσδα Bēthesda {pronounced *bay-thes-dah*} Of Chaldee origin (compare [H1004] and [H2617]); *house of kindness*; Bethesda, a pool in Jerusalem: - Bethesda.

2 G4745 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries) στοά stoa

Jesus came to Jerusalem to worship God His Father, to celebrate this unnamed feast, and entered Jerusalem at a place where there was a pool called **Bethesda** or literally, **House of Kindness**. What a strange name for a pool - actually, a pretty big pool. We see that around this pool - *the House of Kindness* - there were **five porches** or flat, covered areas where people could gather. I want you to see what Jesus saw, and realize the irony of it.

Jesus comes into Jerusalem to worship His Father, and comes to a place called **House of Kindness**.

The Bible says:

FOCAL John 5:3 KJV "In these **lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting** for the moving of the water. "

Jesus saw this place was *packed, literally packed* with people. Each one of these covered porches were packed with people. People who were **blind**, crying out because, in their blindness - and with no system of welfare in Israel at this time - starving for lack of food. Who will hire a blind person when a sighted person is there? Who will protect a blind person? Will not thieves rob them, and rapists take advantage of them. Blind, and unable to see - what will they do? But there weren't just blind people here, but there were people who were **halt**

{pronounced *sto-ah*} Probably from G2476; a *colonnade* or interior *piazza*: - porch.

(limping, crippled), **withered** (shrunken or dried up, scorched), and **impotent** (sick or weak) people around this pool. These people were in various stages of suffering, of misery, of agony. Can you hear the moans, perhaps even the screams of these people? These people waited for the water of the **House of Kindness** to begin to boil, to stir. The Bible says these poor suffering people were ...

FOCAL John 5:3b-4 KJV "... 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."

I've never heard anyone preach a sermon about the **angel** who **went down at a certain season into the pool** to stir the water. We see the word **angel** and immediately assume that this is a creature from God. Some, like *Robertson* in his *Word Pictures*³ say that this verse is not in the original manuscripts of Scripture. The New International Version even omits the translation of this text, skipping it entirely. I have a problem with that on a couple of grounds. First, I admit that I'm not the brightest tack in the pack, but when Jesus asks one of the sick men **wilt thou be made whole?**, that man answers in verse 7:

3 All of this verse is wanting in the oldest and best manuscripts like Aleph B C D W 33 Old Syriac, Coptic versions, Latin Vulgate. It is undoubtedly added, like the clause in [Joh_5:3](#), to make clearer the statement in [Joh_5:7](#). Tertullian is the earliest writer to mention it. The Jews explained the healing virtues of the intermittent spring by the ministry of angels. But the periodicity of such angelic visits makes it difficult to believe. It is a relief to many to know that the verse is spurious. (Robertson's Word Pictures)

FOCAL John 5:7 KJV "... 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 obvious that the man equated healing with the stirring of the waters but, because he couldn't get down into the waters he couldn't be healed.

The man was looking to the waters to be healed. He was looking for someone to help him into the stirring waters⁴. So something stirred those waters.

Something was causing people to gather around that pool, so much so that there was a **great multitude** there. These people were literally lying on top of one another, fighting to get to the pool, using every ounce of strength to get there and be healed.

Beloved, I don't have the slightest doubt in my mind that an angel stirred that pool, and that people gathered around the **House of Kindness** fighting one another to be healed. I just want you to remember that *not all angels are from God*, and one of the greatest angels ever created is the most evil being there ever was. Lucifer, the angel we call Satan, caused an uprising in Heaven, and led a third of the angels there to rebel against God. I don't have a problem believing that an angel stirred that water, because I believe it was one of Satan's fallen who enticed people to stare at that pool. I don't have a problem believing that the devil was the agent who

⁴ Oh, by the way, no one disputes verse 7 as spurious or added text, so I stand along side the King James here!

stirred that water, even offering healing to the *first person* to get into that water. This is what the poor sick man said isn't it? He said:

FOCAL John 5:7 KJV "... **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."

That's exactly how the devil and his demons operate. He says, "**Save yourself, here's how. Step in the water and you'll be made whole! Step over someone else and get the blessing yourself. Whoever gets there first wins! Think of yourself first, drag yourself to the waters, and you'll be saved!**"

Beloved, this is not how God works. He never has worked this way, and never will work this way. Our Bible tells us that God saved *all of Israel*, if she would just follow the Pillar of Fire and Pillar of Cloud out of Egypt. Noah preached a Gospel of Salvation for all mankind, but only a few got on the Ark:

2 Peter 2:4-7 KJV "God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth [person], a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; {6} And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; {7} And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the

wicked"

God saved *all* who would get on the Ark. He saved *all* who would follow Him out of Sodom and Gomorrah. God wanted to save Nineveh, and sent Jonah to that place:

Jonah 1:2-3 NIV "Go to the great city of **Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." {3} But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish... "**

because God wants *everyone who will hear the Gospel to be saved*. The Bible tells us that God is

2 Peter 3:9 HCSB "... not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance."

The Bible also tells us that:

John 3:14-17 KJV "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: {15} That **whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. {16} For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."****

You see, God doesn't just save the *first person into the pool* - that's not His method. No Beloved, God saves *all who will come to Him*. If God were stirring that pool called **House of Kindness** then the water would have started boiling and it would have never stopped! Everybody who stepped into that pool by faith would have been healed. God wants all to be saved, all to be healed, all to be empowered, all to be blessed, all to be adopted as children of God, all to be under the Blood of Christ.

But God wants you to stop looking at the **House of Kindness** and start looking at the **House of Christ**. He wants you to stop looking at the **House of Human Effort** and start looking at the **House of Divine Power**.

The Bible tells us:

Jeremiah 17:5-8 KJV "Thus saith the LORD; **Cursed [be] the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. {6} For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, [in] a salt land and not inhabited. {7} Blessed [is] the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. {8} For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and [that] spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see**

when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

This poor man was sitting by the water and, every time the waters stirred, he's struggle and try to get to the source of salvation. His own weakness stopped him from getting to that water.

The Water needed to come to him.

You see Beloved, when we try to save ourselves we just bring a curse on ourselves. We are all weak, we are all impotent, we are all unable. The Water of Life must come to us. Just as Jesus went to this man, you must ask Jesus to come to you. Just as Jesus asked this man:

FOCAL John 5:6 KJV "... **Wilt thou be made whole?**"

He asks you the same question. **Wilt thou be made whole?** Do you want a life where God is a very real presence, enabling you to walk in faith? Do you want a Companion Who will walk with you through this life, giving you the confidence you need to live apart from this evil world? You cannot heal yourselves - but Christ can heal you.

Human strength and good works cannot heal you - Christ must heal you. Wilt thou be made whole?

2. The Law Cannot Heal You

FOCAL John 5:8-9 KJV "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. "

When this man was healed (and, by the way, he is the *only one* who was reported as being healed this day; probably because he was the only one who took his eyes off the water and put them on Jesus) he did as Jesus asked. He **took up his bed and walked**. The man picked up his bed and walked. The Bible tells us that this was a special day, a **sabbath** day, and it wasn't long before we see this dear healed man meets his first *sour pickles*.

You've all met the sour pickles, and had them pour salt on your parade many times in your lives. These people see the Grace of God that bringeth salvation, but feel that Grace is not complete unless we season it with a little Law.

These people didn't look at this poor man and say, "Praise God, you're healed! You've been sick for thirty-eight years, and now you're away from that terrible life. God has made you whole, praise His Holy Name!" No, the sour pickles never do that. They looked at this man and said:

FOCAL John 5:10 KJV "... It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. "

Beloved, I want to point out that the Law *cannot* save you - it takes Jesus to save you! The Law exists for one purpose and one purpose only: it shows us that we are all sinners, condemned and unclean before. We sing that beautiful song:

**I stand amazed in the presence
of Jesus, the Nazarene,
and wonder how He could love me,
a sinner, condemned, unclean.
How marvelous! how wonderful!
And my song shall ever be
How marvelous! how wonderful!
Is my Savior's love for me!**⁵

but often fail to understand how truly marvelous salvation by faith in Christ is. The Law reminds us, as a school master or a tutor:

Galatians 3:24-25 NASB "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. {25} But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

that we must have Christ as Savior! The Law tells us *thou shalt not lie* knowing that we have not only violated God's ninth commandment in the past, but we will violate it again in the future. The Law tells us *thou shalt not steal* knowing good and well that the sinful creatures that we are will *rob glory from God and Christ* and quickly take it to ourselves or to another. The Law says

⁵ My Savior's Love, Charles H. Gabriel, 1856-1932

thou shalt love God first knowing full well that we often place our family, our friends, even our own comfort above that of worshiping God. How many times have we watched television instead of praising Him and praying to Him? How many times have we placed our own desires above that of God's?

When this man was healed he didn't even know Jesus' name! He immediately picked up his bed and walked away from our Lord, never even saying "thank you" for the relief that he felt.

The Law of God condemns us all as sinners, and none of us - whether we be pastor, evangelist, deacon, or layman - can stand long in its harsh glare. Those who live under the Law and not under Grace become like these people who came to this man. They couldn't see the miracle that occurred for their own self righteousness. The Law points out sin, but the hard heart of the religious often cultivate their own laws out of God's Law - and miss out on the joy of a life founded on Christ.

The Christian life is not a lawless life. I want you to notice that the Bible tells us:

FOCAL John 5:14 KJV "... 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."

The Christian is accountable to Christ, not to the Law.

The warning that Jesus gave this man shows us that God often uses sickness to get our attention.

He uses sickness to bring us to the **House of Kindness** so Jesus can come. When the Lord comes He doesn't take us to the bubbling waters of the pool, but He comes to us and brings the Water of Life to us. It is no coincidence that Jesus came to the waters of the House of Kindness by way of Samaria. Just a few weeks ago we studied Jesus and the woman at the well, and we read where Jesus told that woman:

John 4:14 NIV "but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

When you follow Jesus He brings the water to you, not you to the water. Jesus comes to you, comes to live inside you, and causes you as a new creature in Him to become a pool of life.

Those who are Christ's are creatures with the potential to bring Living Water to all around us. Those who are Christ's take the message of Jesus to a lost and dying world, a thirsting world, a parched world. We carry the hope of Eternal Life by faith in Christ in us, with us, and are supposed to be stirred not by the Law nor by an angel but by Grace and love and service to the King.

Those who live by the Law never see Jesus manifest in their lives. They become like these poor, confused people who actively work against Christ. We read:

FOCAL John 5:15-16 KJV "... 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."

This is the life grounded in the Law - a life that seeks to persecute Jesus and to slay Him, because He had done these things on the sabbath day. Listen my Beloved, you have three choices in life:

a. You can try to do it yourselves. If you do this you will find yourselves - just like that poor man at the pool called House of Kindness - falling short. You'll never have the power you need while you rely on yourselves alone. Those who pull themselves up by their bootstraps usually find out that leather wears out and breaks.

b. You can try to do it by following the Law. Keep trying to live your life by the Law and not by the Spirit, and see that the Scripture is oh so true:

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 NIV "Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. {5} Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our

competence comes from God. {6} He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. "

The confidence we must have is that Christ, the Living Water of God, has come to live in our hearts.

When we begin to live by the Law and not by the leading of Christ's Spirit then we will come to that grinding place where we are no longer serving Him - we are seeking to slay Him.

Our only hope is,

c. To accept Christ Jesus as both Savior and Lord. To obey Him no matter what. To follow His leadership and His Word. You see, Jesus worked on the sabbath - as He said -

FOCAL John 5:17 KJV "... **My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. "**

God, the Giver of the Law, called Jesus to work on the sabbath. Not to till the fields, nor to fish, nor to in any way earn money through the sweat of His brow. No Beloved, this was not the work that Jesus did on the sabbath. The work He did is the work He does even today. Jesus told His disciples:

John 6:27-29 KJV "Labor not for the meat which

perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. {28} Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? {29} Jesus answered and said unto them, **This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."**

Here is THE work of God - that you believe on and worship Jesus, serving not the Law but Him. All who believe on Him shall never be ashamed.

All who believe on Him shall be saved, both now and into eternity.

May God bless the preaching of this Word, and cause you to make a commitment to Jesus Christ this very day!