

## “Pool of Bethesda!”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Q:** Do people really receive Divine healings at certain places/spa's? - I know of people who swore by *Murrieta Hot Springs* when it was open to the public.
1. There is the spa at Lourdes; the shrine at Guadeloupe; the pool of Bethesda.
    - a) Surely some medicinal value. Maybe high in minerals, iron, etc.
  2. Every country has special places like this, where people flock by the hundreds to be healed!
  3. Unfortunately their focus gets distracted on **how** they might be healed, rather than on **the One** who can truly heal.
- B. **First 3 miracles** in John show how a person is **saved**:
1. 1st (water to wine) salvation is through the **word** of God [whatever He says to U do it]
  2. 2nd (healing the Nobleman's son) salvation is by **faith**; [Took faith to bel son was healed]
  3. 3rd (healing the paralytic man) salvation is by **grace**. [unmerited healing at *Beth-esda*]
- C. **Outline:** A **Bed Carrying a Man**; A **Man Carrying a Bed**; **Hypocrites Carrying Legalism**.

### II. **POOL OF BETHESDA - HOUSE OF GRACE!**

- A. **A BED CARRYING A MAN!** (1-7)
- B. (1) Each incident of controversy is set w/in the context of a **Jewish Festival**.
1. This takes place in *downtown Jerusalem*.
- C. (2) **The Sheep Gate** – Today St Stephan's gate [Located northern wall close to the N.E. Corner]
1. Just outside of St. Anne's church (acoustics).
  2. Found in 1960. 2 adjacent pools. W/an area that enclosed them between the 2 pools(5 porticos/*covered colonnades*). The sick would congregate there in its shade
    - a) Believe it to be the place as they found a **fresco** there w/an angel stirring the water{from 1889} believing that the early Christian era believed it to be there.
- D. **Bethesda** (or Bet-zatha) - House of Grace/Mercy. [Grace? kindness to those undeserving]
1. Also Has been translated: “House of mercy,...the portico,...of the Olive”.

2. In that Jesus **saw** a **multitude** of sick people, but He **chose** only **1 man** & **healed** him. [Ought to **humble** all of us to know we are chosen “*in Him*” & not because of our own merits but because of **His grace!**] {eg. 5:21}
- E. (3) **The Great Multitude** Suffering from all kinds of ailments. Waiting, believing, despairing
1. Many were brought & left. The odds pretty high on being the 1st in.
  2. The **blind** wouldn't **see** the water stir; The **deaf** hoped to be watching the water at the rt. time, for they wouldn't **hear** the rush for the pool; The **lame** had to rely on a friend to **lift them over & drop them in**; The **sick** hoped they'd just feel good enough to even get up when it was time.
- F. (3,4) **Note:** Not in some manuscripts. (yet, doesn't change story see vs.7)
1. **Legend?** - A ripple from a subterranean spring at bottom stirring water (thus the placebo effect)? - **Or**, once a person was in when this took place & they were healed...**poof** a legend is born?
- G. (4) **How were the “new arrivals” treated?** People vying & jockeying for position on the waters edge. “**Hey, to the back!**” Probably like trying to get **front curb** at the Rose Bowl parade (squished).
- H. (5) This opening scene/*squalid*; the stench/*repulsive*; the circumstances/*depressing*.
1. **How much hope** do you think he had after 38 years?
  2. **456 consecutive months** of waiting; **13,680 days** getting beat to the water!
  3. **Paralysis** had obviously set in; now he looked just like a **fixture**.
- I. (6) Jesus asks an interesting question to a man who has been sick 38 years, **Do you want to be made well?** - **Why does He ask this?**
1. **Maybe because** some **depend** on their **unfortunate condition** for financial support given by healthy individuals out of pity.
  2. **Maybe because** those who have **experienced prolong pain** or **misfortune** have **surrendered** even **the will to attempt to overcome** their situation in life
  3. **Maybe because** He's bringing this man to the very **bottom** of his **rope!** **So** he'll let go & fall into the ever loving arms of our Savior!
    - a) Get to the end of yourself quickly!
  4. **Do you want to be made well?** - **Do you want to be healed of your addictions?** **Do you want to be made well of your marijuana; drinking; adultery; stealing; lying; gossip; anger; incest; embezzlement; covetousness; pornography?**
    - a) Are you waiting for a sign, a stirring of the water?
    - b) Run to the place where U recognize you can't do it on your own & **you need Jesus!**

- J. With the **tender compassion** of a **child** choosing *the runt of the litter*, Jesus gives special attention to this withered man.
1. He's the **pound puppy** that no one wanted (missing hair chunks; ribs showing; ears drooping; kink in his tail) - **Oh, don't laugh, so were you!**
- K. **Jesus** – **Saw** him, **knew** his conditions, & **knew** how long.
1. Jesus knew all about **this place**; all about **each person**; all about their **legend**; He knew their **hopes** (or lack thereof); their **frustrations**; **disappointments**; & **anticipations**.
  2. **Above knowing** about them, he **cares** about them.
  3. **It was normally a very dismal place, but not on this day...Jesus was there!**
- L. (7) **His plight!**
1. **I have no man** - but he didn't need **help** he needed **healing**.
  2. Warily watching the pool, but no angel came, or came not for him.
    - a) **The danger of this pool is looking to an angel for Hope, rather than the Almighty!**
  3. Yet, maybe his time would come, he waited still.
  4. He **knew not** there was One near him whose **word** could heal in a moment.
  5. **Many are in this same plight!**
    - a) *Waiting for some singular emotion, remarkable impression, or celestial vision; they wait in vain & watch for nought.* (Spurgeon)
    - b) **What are you looking to/for?** - Still waiting for an angel, or a wonder?
- M. *"I want to...But...I can't!"* – *"Yes but..."*; *"I've tried"*; *"I've done everything already!"*
1. There are no hopeless **situations**. There are only **people** who have grown hopeless about them.
  2. Some men only see a **hopeless end**, but the Christian rejoices in an **endless hope!**
- N. **A MAN CARRYING A BED!** (8-9)
- O. Rise from your **bed of despair** & in the **energy of faith** take up your bed & walk!
1. **Rise** – Impossible, the very thing he **could not do** on his own volition!
  2. **Take up your bed** – No going back. Didn't want him to save his spot, in case this wore off.
  3. **Walk** – Continued success; *peripateo* "to walk about".
    - a) He obviously wanted everyone to see this man.

4. **Why didn't He heal all?** – He didn't come to **physically** heal the world, but to **spiritually** heal us! The ones he does heal physically are just **doubly blessed with more of His Mercy**.
- a) *By His stripes we are healed* refers to being healed **spiritually**! We know this by Peters commentary on Is.53 [See 1 Pet.2:24]
- P. This reminds me of Ps.23 - Here's the **Great Shepherd** meeting a **sheep**, by the *sheep gate*, near the *sheep pool*. Whom He **leads beside still waters** (or *waters of rest*); Whom He **causes to lie down in green pastures** (no longer on *brown mats*). Whom he can now say, **the Lord is my Shepherd!**
- Q. **HYPOCRITES CARRYING LEGALISM!** (10-16)
- R. (10) They valued their **traditional principles** more than **people**.
- S. The **law police** show up write him a **ticket** for not *Jay-walking* but *Mat-walking!* :)
1. **Really?** For carrying a *krab'batos*(poor-man's mat)
  2. **Was this the work described in Ex.20:10?** **You shall not do any work on the Sab**
    - a) This did not break **the Law of Moses**, but **their interpretation of it!**
      - (1) **Pharisees came up with 39 categories of unpermitted work along w/a # of tedious restrictions.** [The Rabbis in Jesus day said you are sinning if you "*carried a needle in you robe*" on the Sabbath]
- T. This is where religion gets really stupid & embarrassing! Anytime there's **no joy** over the man's healing, but only **concern** of a **technicality**. [Not jut Judaism, but Christianity]
1. **A man deprived of work** for 38 years is accused of **working too much!!!**
- U. **Legalism** - Legalists measure **spiritual growth** against a yardstick notched incrementally by good works.
1. They're driven by **self-made standards**, but in the end **stunt** growth not **promote** it [Its the art of turning **wine** back into **water!**]
  2. When we lift the veil on legalism...we find **hypocrisy** not **holiness**.
  3. **Legalists made lists of do's & don'ts** based on tradition or personal preference; **then they judge themselves & others on their performance.**
  4. This is..."**Checklist Christianity!**"
  5. Paul describes it in Gal.2:4 **false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.**
    - a) **Grace & freedom** are the hallmarks of christianity, **not law & bondage.**

6. **Law & grace** are *opposite* living standards. But this doesn't mean there wasn't **grace** for those who lived under the **law**; **nor** no **laws** for us under **grace**.
    - a) **Grace** never promotes a *do-as-you-please* philosophy or a loose life of selfishness, sinfulness, & licentiousness.
  7. OT Israelites under **Law** were motivated by **fear** & empowered only by **flesh**; NT saints under **grace** are motivated by **love** & empowered only by the **H.S.**
- V. Pockets of legalism thrive in almost **every church** & probably in each of **our hearts** somewhere.
- W. (14) **Found at the temple** - Probably went there to give thanks.
- X. Just like the woman at the well, Jesus brings up the *deeper condition* of the **man's relationship with God**, the **sin** issue, to bring the **ultimate healing**.
1. **Did sin get him into this situation?** - Some **sickness** is directly tied to **sin** (*Venereal Disease* from sexual promiscuity, for instance)
  2. The world says, "**you made your bed, now lie in it!**"  
Jesus says, "**you made your bed, but I say you can get out of it!**"
- Y. (15) **The Testimony** – He didn't tell the Jews **it was Jesus who had made him walk about w/his bed! No!** "**It was Jesus who made me well**" (phys. & spiritually)!
- Z. No matter how **miserable** your life has been, no matter how **lame** your spiritual life, or how long you've been **limping** - **Jesus can change it!**
1. **Q: Do you wish to be made well? Do you desire a change?**  
**Do you long to be restored to everything** God created you to be?
    - a) If so, **Jesus is your ticket** out of that **slum**.
    - b) He'll give you the **grace & strength** to **take up your bed**(you've made) & **walk**.
- AA. **Compassion**: (verb) is used 12 x's in NT [1 Good Samaritan; 11 God's compassion]
1. Originally referred to **man's inner parts** {heart, liver, abdomen, intestines, even womb}
  2. In our modern english we use the phrase "**he has guts**" regarding **courage**.
    - a) Yet, **courage** has nothing really to do with our **intestines**.
  3. Sometimes **sharp pain in the abdomen** accompanies **intense feelings of compassion/pity** for those we love.
  4. Hear God's deep **love & sensitivity** to **your pain** this morning!