

“ THREE ‘LAME ‘EXCUSES”

John 5:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

- this morning we are going to look at the gospel account of Jesus healing a man who had been sick for 38 years
- in the midst of a great multitude of people with severe disabilities (blind, lame, paralysed) Jesus came up to one man and asked a pointed question
- DO YOU WANT TO BE MADE WELL?
- the question was to reveal the man’s frustrations, his disappointments, and his life discouragements
- but we will notice the man never directly answered Jesus’ question
- Jesus was asking if he WANTED to be made well
- Jesus knew what the Father was directing Him to do
- but as usual, Jesus began with a question to involve the person in the process
- and this morning I believe the same question is still as true to us
- DO WE WANT TO BE MADE WELL?
- do we want all that God has for us, or do we feel we are hopelessly stuck in our situation, blaming other people and even blaming our circumstances?
- we will be considering these things as we look at the first nine verses of John 5
- vv. 1-4 tell us about the **venue**; vv. 5-7 the **voice** of Jesus; and vv. 8-9 show us the **victory**
- read John 5:1-9; pray

I. THE VENUE VV. 1-4

A. The Place (vv. 1-2)

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

- it is uncertain which feast this was, although it was probably one of the three main feasts all Jewish men were required to attend in Jerusalem
- Jerusalem wasn't the most common location for Jesus' earthly ministry
- yet on the required feasts we see Jesus using those times to mainly show His fulfilment of the Sabbath
- the Sheep Gate was located just to the north-east of the Temple Mount
- it was here where sheep were brought to be prepared for sacrifice
- this pool had five covered areas under which people could rest to get out from the direct sunlight

B. The People (vv. 3-4)

3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

- this became a place where many (a great multitude) sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed lay
- waiting for the moving of the water...* apparently God, in His manifold mercy, had sent an angel on more than one occasion to allow this act of mercy (Bethesda=house of mercy)

II. THE VOICE VV. 5-7

A. Jesus Sees and Knows (vv. 5-6a)

5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

- we really don't know the actual age of the man
- just that he had had this infirmity 38 years

- maybe he was in his forties or even fifties
- nor do we know what the infirmity was
- apparently it was connected with movement, according to the description of his need
- v. 6: notice three things about this verse:
 1. Jesus saw him lying there
 2. Jesus knew that he already had been in that condition a long time
 3. Jesus asked the man, "Do you want to be made well?"
- why didn't Jesus say that to all the great multitude who were there?
- wouldn't that have been a greater miracle?
- why hadn't He helped this man before now?
- Jesus Himself said His words and His actions were always directed by the Father and not His own independence
- but here we see Jesus focused on one man in the midst of the multitude
- think of this for a moment: Jesus saw, Jesus knew, Jesus asked
- right this very moment the same things are true in this very room:**
- Jesus sees us in the midst of the multitudes in Exeter**
- Jesus knows us, He knows all that has happened and why and the effects that we had had to endure because of those things**
- Jesus asks us the very same question: DO WE WANT TO BE MADE WELL?**

B. Jesus 'Question (v. 6b)

He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

- it was almost a rhetorical question
- but it was a simple question that seemed obvious enough
- yet notice that the man didn't really answer Jesus 'question

- he only gave excuses
- isn't it too often the case with us?**
- we have our reasons, our justifications, our pride on why we are in our current situation of life**
- but often we don't come clean with Jesus and simply answer the question**

C. Just Excuses (v. 7)

7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

- notice the man addressed Jesus as Sir...
- he didn't know who Jesus was, nor did he call him Lord
- v. 7: I believe we can discern three core excuses the man gave to Jesus
 1. he blamed **people** for not helping him (can't they see that I can't do this by myself? Nobody wants to help me)
 2. he blamed **the angel** for not stirring up the water often enough (I.e.: he blamed circumstances)
 3. he blamed **people** for being so self-focused on their own need
- I.e.: he was **trusting in other people to help him** be made well
- he was **trusting in the circumstances being just right** to be made well
- his focus for years was on the pool instead of on the Great Physician, Jesus
- I find it interesting Jesus' question revealed the heart of the man
- in effect the man was saying, "I'm this way because of the fault of others and evil circumstances"
- but again Jesus' question was not answered by the lame man,

- he only gave three 'lame 'excuses
- the man had given up hope
- he had given up hope because he was trusting in circumstances to be favourable
- he had given up hope because other people refused to see his situation as he saw it
- but here was Jesus, the Great Physician, initiating this providential event and asking a simple question
- I believe in the same way Jesus comes to us and sees us in our condition**
- He knows how long we have been dealing with everything going on**
- all He asks is a simple question: DO YOU WANT TO BE MADE WELL?**
- we offer Him all the reasons why it won't work, and really not answering the question**
- the correct answer? Yes...**
- so very often what needs to be healed is on the inside of us rather than the outward situation or malady**

III. THE VICTORY VV. 8-9

A. The Command (v. 8)

8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

- at the word of Jesus there arose faith and a sense of healing that caused the lame man to initiate movement
- i.e.: get up and get moving, and don't come back to trust in this place, circumstances or other people
- notice that Jesus never used this water to make the man whole, nor did He even touch the man
- I believe this was so that the trust would be in Him and not in the tradition or the formula

B. The Cure (v. 9)

9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

- notice Jesus 'word, RISE: it was a word of **hope**;
- Jesus 'word, TAKE UP YOUR BED, was a word of **faith**
- Jesus 'word, WALK, was a word of **direction** to move forward and away from what was relied upon before
- Jesus chose to heal this man on the Sabbath as a proof of the real rest that could only be found in Him
- the seventh day (Sabbath) was given to Israel as a sign of things to come
- as beneficial as that day of rest still is in the natural, it pointed forward to a more significant rest for the people of God (the Book of Hebrews)
- true rest would be found, not in a day, but in the deliverer from sin and death
- Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath;
- He is our rest

Mat 11:27-30 NKJV

(27) All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (28) Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

-DO WE WANT TO BE MADE WELL?