

# **Sermon on Sinning Endangers your Life**

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## **Text:**

**John 5:2-14** <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup> Here a great number of disabled people used to lie-- the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" <sup>7</sup> "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." <sup>8</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." <sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, <sup>10</sup> and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." <sup>11</sup> But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" <sup>12</sup> So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" <sup>13</sup> The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. <sup>14</sup> Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Of the two teaching tracks I'll teach the track on sinning endangers your life.**

This passage gives us two tracks of teachings. One track has to do with Jesus' declaration of the spirit of the law (Sabbath) versus the letter of the law which incurred the ire of the Jewish authorities who were more interested in law enforcement than human relief. The other track involves how sinning endangers your life. In the interest of time and space I will deal with the latter track – how sinning endangers your life.

### **1.2 There are three categories of reasons why people suffer**

In this passage we see the beginning of Jesus' treatise on why people suffer. From the whole revelation of scripture we have come to know that people suffer for three major reasons:

1. Suffering for God's purposes;

2. Suffering because of the fallen world we live in; and
3. Suffering because of sin that is attributable to you.

### **1.3 This passage teaches us one of the three categories – sin induces suffering**

In this particular passage we learn that personal sin can bring about sickness and troubles in your situation.

A lady came to see me reporting of a sickness that UMass Memorial Hospital has been unable to diagnose. She reported that some creatures were moving under her skin. She couldn't sleep. Suspecting it was a spiritual problem I asked her if she had gotten involved with the occult. She confessed that when she was looking to get pregnant and even though she was a Christian she went to consult an occultist in Togo. I asked her to confess her idolatry to God and ask for forgiveness. Then while I was leading her in the repentance prayer she said in her prayer how she had consulted occultist two times and not just the one time she told me. The occultist was not able to make her fertile and she suffered the consequences of her spiritual adultery (abandoning God for idols) and lost her marriage and is now suffering in her body. Her serious abominable sin had endangered her life.

Sin can endanger your life here on this earth and endanger your life in eternity. Sin separates you from God and makes your wide open for the devil to physically torture you. Sin can mess up your marriage, your finances, your job, your family, and any situation in your life.

## **2 The invalid man was in a hopeless situation**

### **2.1 The man's sin made him an invalid and paralyzed his ability to seek healing**

This brings us to the invalid man in our passage. According to verse 14 the man's sins is what caused him to become invalid. The text does not tell us what his sin was. But obviously, whatever the sin was, it endangered his life to the point where he became an invalid for 38 years – more than half a lifetime! He lay in one of the covered porches near the pool of Bethesda because he believed in the healing power of the pool. He was not looking for healing in any other ways other than getting into the Bethesda pool when it was stirred. And though he looked forward to being healed in the pool his condition itself prevented him from getting his healing. He was in a catch-22: he wanted to get into the pool for healing but as an invalid he couldn't get

into the pool by himself. Then we will also ask why this man was without any helper? Have his family and friends abandoned him?

## **2.2 Your sin can also incapacitate your situation and paralyze your ability to seek a solution**

There are some situations that paralyze you to the point where you yourself cannot even pray for it. In some situations the devil makes you numb to the effects of the situation such that though you suffer you do not see clearly enough how to get out of it. I know some people are so paralyzed in their marriages that they even refuse to pray for it even though they look at other people's marriages and wish they had a better marriage.

Are you in a hopeless situation? If so, begin to look outside your situation. Begin to look beyond your normal understanding as to how your situation will get better. Begin to look beyond the physical and into the spiritual. Begin to look to God instead of human scheming and situation. When the situation is hopeless, only God can turn it around.

## **3 Jesus wanted the invalid man to request the healing**

### **3.1 Divine healing requires the sick to seek the healing**

When Jesus came upon the invalid man's situation, he had compassion upon him. He wanted to heal him but healing turns on the faith of the sick person. Jesus wanted to know whether he wanted to be healed. It may surprise you that Jesus asked him that question even though the man had been lying next to the pool of healing looking to be healed. But is it possible that the man had become accustomed to his lifestyle under that situation and he was not really seriously seeking healing. He had adapted himself and accepted his condition probably saying it is God's will that he suffer.

Some of you have accepted your situation believing that it is God's will. But as I have said before, unless you have a revelation from God just as Paul had about the thorn in his side, then you cannot use God's will as an excuse. Though Job suffered innocently, he did not accept it as God's will until God revealed it to him. Never accept your situation as God's will. On the other hand it is healthy for you to examine the possible underlying causes of your situation – whether it is some sin that you have committed, whether it is suffering because of the fallen world, or whether it is suffering for God's purposes.

### **3.2 You must ask directly and plainly to get your breakthrough**

When Jesus asked the man whether he wanted get well, he did not give him a direct answer but began to tell a story! You must tell Jesus exactly what you want.

There is a commercial by The Royal Bank of Scotland that dramatizes the bank's ethos that actions speak louder than words. They humorously highlight how much time is wasted procrastinating and deliberating when, as those who work at and with the bank know, action is required. The setting of the commercial is a wedding ceremony.

The minister asks the groom, "Do you Morgan Ambrose Roberts take this woman to be your wife?"

The groom answers as follows as he starts walking slowing away from the bride: "Of course that very much depends on what you mean by the question, 'do you?' Forward looking statements involve risks and uncertainties. We're opening a can of worms here. No single answer really presents itself. I mean, have we really explored every avenue? Have the parties made certain representations, warranties, and agreements in connection with the merger? ... Who among us will ever know?"

While the groom is speaking, the minister is puzzled, the bride is puzzled, the bride's mother is puzzled and starts crying, and an invited Chinese gentleman looks puzzled and checks the program.

The Best Man then cuts into the long uncertain answer of the groom and responds to the minister's question simply saying, "I do."

The Minister than says to the Best Man, "I pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride."

The Best Man kisses the bride and takes her away as the voice-over says "Less talk, Make it happen. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group."

When we come to Jesus he wants us to tell him directly what we need. No playing around. Don't talk about your problem or around your problem. Tell him what your situation is. He even instructs us in Luke 11:9-10 about this when he said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

## **4 The invalid man accepted Jesus' involvement in his situation and obeyed Jesus' command and was healed**

### **4.1 Jesus will heal only when you accept him into your situation**

When the invalid accepted Jesus' involvement in his situation Jesus decided to change his situation. The healing power of the Bethesda pool was fixed in a geographical location in a specific time period. The healing power of Jesus, however, found in the pool of Jesus' blood is universal and transcends time and situations. When Jesus comes around there is healing surrounding him. The man was relying on the physical dispensation of healing that was limited in scope and efficacy (only the first person in the pool can get healed.) Jesus was offering healing based on a new spiritual dispensation and unlimited in scope and fully effective because he is the Jehovah Rapha – the God who heals. That is why the songwriter wrote the following song:

Everywhere he went, he was doing good  
The mighty healer, he healed the leprous  
When the cripple saw him, they started walking  
Everywhere he went, my lord was doing good.

### **4.2 Faith must translate into obedience before you can get your breakthrough**

Jesus commanded the man to get up, pickup his mat and walk. These are three commands that required faith and obedience: (1) faith in the person who spoke it that what he is saying will come true; and obedience to the person who spoke it as one who has the requisite authority. While the text does not say, I believe as the invalid man resolved to get up and began to get up, “at once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.” (vs. 9)

Here we see another example of how faith in and obedience to God brings results. Is your faith in God demonstrated through your obedience? Have you separated those two? Abraham's faith in God had to be demonstrated through his obedience in following God's command to sacrifice Isaac. All things being equal, I don't know anyone who is flagrantly disobedience who gets results from God! It just doesn't happen. God is not favorably disposed to disobedient people. But he is favorably disposed to obedient people and so if you are obedient you are more likely to receive your breakthrough.

## **5 Conclusion**

There are three major reasons why people suffer. People suffer for God's purposes, or because of the fallen world we live in, or because of sin that is attributable to you. Our main passage has taught about the last reason – your own sin induces suffering.

The invalid man was in a hopeless situation because his sin made him an invalid and paralyzed his ability to seek healing. Your sin can also incapacitate your situation and paralyze your ability to seek a solution. Jesus wanted the invalid man to request the healing because divine healing requires the sick to seek the healing. In the same way, you must ask directly and plainly to get your breakthrough. The invalid man accepted Jesus' involvement in his situation and obeyed Jesus' command and was healed. Jesus will heal only when you accept him into your situation. Your faith must translate into obedience before you can get your breakthrough