

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages  
Sermon Notes & References

A Sabbath Day's Work  
John 5:1-18

March 13, 2016

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<sup>A</sup> Psalm 32:3; 1 Corinthians 11:30; James 5:14-15; John 9:2-3

<sup>B</sup> Luke 19:10

<sup>C</sup> 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>D</sup> Philipians 3:4-7

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<sup>E</sup> John 3:36

A. Sickness & Sin

1. The Connection

- a. most Christians would agree that sickness among mankind had its origin in the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; with that fall,
  - (A) physical death entered mankind's world
  - (B) the creation that God pronounced good was now marred by sin
    - (1) woman would have labour and pain in the bearing of children
    - (2) the ground brought forth both good plants and evil
  - (C) sickness, a precursor and cause of death, underlies our lives
- b. also we find in Scripture that there are times when sickness of an individual is directly attributable to sin, particularly unconfessed sin
  - (A) David wrote, "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long." (Psalms 32:3)
  - (B) Paul said about those in Corinth who abused the Lord's Table, "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep." (1 Corinthians 11:30)
  - (C) James has this to say, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him." (James 5:14-15)
- c. but there has been a false idea abroad from ancient times to modern, that every sickness is the direct result of that person's sin
  - (A) Job's three friends accused him of that, and at the end God told them that they were entirely wrong
  - (B) another time, Jesus and his disciples encountered a blind man, "And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him." (John 9:2-3)
  - (C) and some have concluded from Jesus words in verse 14 of this chapter, "sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (AV), that this man had suffered these 38 years because of some sin that he had done: but we shall see that is not necessarily so.

## 2. The Events of This History

- a. nevertheless, show the parallels between
  - (A) sickness, which is the lot and portion of mankind, and
  - (B) sin, which is the pandemic afflicting all mankind
- b. one of the words used in the Bible, which is translated "save", and its derivatives such as "salvation" shows, from a positive perspective, the connection between sickness and sin
  - (A) it can mean make whole or healthy in a literal, physical sense
  - (B) but also make whole or healthy in a literal, spiritual sense
- c. Jesus Himself declared His mission to mankind
  - (A) "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) – Jesus' actions in his earthly ministry always had a distinct purpose
    - (1) he came to this pool in Jerusalem to deliver this man from the sickness that had held him in bondage for 38 years
    - (2) he later came to the temple to find this man and deliver him from the sin that held him in bondage all of his life
  - (B) we who hold to the fundamentals of the faith have been rightly accused of the pursuit of the health of men's souls to the neglect of their physical needs – James shows how wrong it is to do so
  - (C) but unfortunately, others have pursued the health of men's bodies to the neglect of their eternal souls
  - (D) Christ, in His ministry, had a compassion for both
- d. let us consider this passage in the light of these comments

## B. Useless Pool, Useless Works

### 1. The Scriptures & Its Manuscripts

- a. If you are using a modern translation, you may come here to a foot-note, or even omission, of the last part of verse 3 and all of verse 4, that these are not found in the oldest or best manuscripts
  - (A) this can be disturbing, because Satan uses it in order to raise doubts, to put the question in our minds, "If we are unsure about these verses, then how can be sure of any, being God's word?"
  - (B) let us state emphatically that we believe that
    - (1) "... men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:21), and,
    - (2) "All Scripture is inspired by God ..." (2 Timothy 3:16)
  - (C) but we also recognise that the later copying of these holy words was done by sinful, faulty – and in some cases wicked – men, as has also been true of its translations

- b. But God has protected His word, against every attempt to destroy it, by giving us 4-5000 surviving manuscripts – ancient, hand-written copies in full or in part – of the NT; an unknown number of the OT
  - (A) for at least 1500 years, men have compared these MSS and used them to correct one another – the Jews had a body of men called Masoretes who did this, and Christian scholars did the same
  - (B) the results are amazing: nearly all differences between MSS are
    - (1) differences in regional spelling
    - (2) minor differences in word order (an influence of time & place)
    - (3) sometimes, including a word or phrase found in one of the gospels in another gospel record of the same event, or the like
    - (4) none of which distort the teaching of Scripture in any way
  - (C) so cases like these two verses are very rare, nor do any affect our statement of faith, nor the teaching of the way of salvation
- c. some final thoughts on this for your assurance
  - (A) those who make these judgements are likewise sinful men, and while they make their choices on logical bases, they can be wrong
  - (B) so, while these verses are not found in the few earliest MSS dating from the second and fourth centuries, yet Tertullian (ca 145-220AD) quotes the passage: "An angel, by his intervention, was wont to stir the pool at Bethsaida. They who were complaining of ill health used to watch for him; for whoever was first to descend into these waters, after his washing ceased to complain." –{2}.

## 2. Lying by the Pool

- a. this man had attempted to find healing; and failed
  - (A) for 38 years his attempt to heal himself of his ailment, whatever it was, was unsuccessful
  - (B) the ailment itself prevented his stepping down into the water
  - (C) and others didn't show any care for him: the rule of pool seems to have been, "every man for himself" and "first come, first serve"
- b. he was unable to find others to bring him to this healing
  - (A) upon Jesus' questions, "Do you wish to get well?"
  - (B) he answered, "How, with no one to put me into the water?"
- c. he could not help himself; no man would, nor could, help him
  - (A) but during the first decade of his lying there, there was born in the village of Bethlehem the One who came to do what he could not

- (B) and that Person, now comes to him, to save him; to heal him; to make him healthy and whole; to give him
- d. do I have to labour the point?
  - (A) many go through life attempting to heal themselves of that other great malady – the deathly sin that has invaded our body & soul
  - (B) but they do so in vain; the very sickness of sin itself makes all of our efforts, our works useless in saving our own souls
  - (C) Paul had this to say about his own attempt to gain salvation by works: “although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.” (Philippians 3:4-7)

### C. Healing, Physical & Spiritual

#### 1. A Command with Power

- a. So Jesus speaks to this man – He has come in tenderness and with much compassion; it is no accident that he is there
  - (A) what prayers has this man uttered all these years – it does not say; we do not know; what else was he able to do, lying there?
  - (B) Christ comes as the answer
  - (C) His question – “Do you want to be made well?” – is not frivolous as it may appear at first sight, but
    - (1) it is in its very speaking an offer of help
    - (2) it draws the man’s attention to the failure of all this man’s efforts this many years to heal himself; of his dire condition
    - (3) it raises in him hope that someone else cares about him
  - (D) Jesus says: “Get up! Pick up your bed! and start walking around”
- b. with the command coming from Jesus, there also comes the power
  - (A) the man asks no questions; he trusts Jesus’ words, and by faith he stands up – whatever the infirmity was, it is gone
  - (B) he picks up his bed – no, it wasn’t a four-poster, but a mat or cushion on which he could lay beside the pool, under the shelter of one of those five porches
  - (C) and he walks – his first steps by himself in 38 years

## 2. A Word in the Temple

### a. "Afterward Jesus found him in the temple ..." (v 14)

(A) Jesus has dealt with the bodily ailment that has afflicted the man

(B) He has done so in a fashion that underlines its miraculous nature

(C) "Immediately the man became well" – immediately!

(1) if we were reading the book of Mark, we should not take much notice of this word, for he uses it over and over

(2) but with John it is rare for him to use it, and so it stands out

(3) 38 long years this man waited for deliverance

(4) when Christ works His work it is instantaneous and complete

(D) but there is a spiritual work to be done in this man's life

### b. for his entire lifetime – not just 38 years but from his very birth

(A) this man, along with all mankind before and after him, has been bound in his soul by sin

(B) Jesus declaration to him is that now he has a choice

(1) he has met Christ, been freed of bodily bondage to sickness

(2) he can also by faith be freed from spiritual bondage to sin

### c. 'Afterward Jesus \*found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you.'" (John 5:14)

(A) "sin no more" or "do not sin anymore" do not really adequately convey all that is in Jesus' statement to this man

(B) it is easy to see how this might be interpreted as a reference to some distant, long ago sin that brought to him that calamity

(C) but Jesus' command to the man – and it is a command – has all to do with the present: "Stop sinning!", "Do not continue sinning"

(1) to this point in his life this man has been subject to sin – rebellion and separation from God – as his life principle

(2) much as we may attempt to live a good life in our own strength we are living according to that same life principle

(3) for "Without faith it is impossible to please God" Hebrews 11:6 – and every other attempt is rebellion and therefore sin

(4) by faith in Christ we are to enter a newness of life in which "sin shall not be master over you" (Romans

6:14)

- (D) What is the alternative to accepting this new life in Christ?
  - (1) that something worse may befall you
  - (2) worse than 38 years of sickness, weakness, being shrivelled up
  - (3) what can that be, but death – not merely physical death, but eternal, spiritual, everlasting death
- d. This book of John leads us on a trip, a trip to meet Christ
  - (A) and the result of that meeting can be either life or death
  - (B) “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36 NAS)

## D. Keeping the Sabbath

### 1. Pharisees: Man’s Way

- a. this all took place on the Sabbath: the healing; carrying the bed
- b. thus Jesus now comes into further conflict with the Jewish rulers
- c. they met the man carrying his bed, complained of this and sought, not the One who healed him, but the one who dared to instruct him to carry his bed; asking “What fellow is this who told you...?”
- d. William Hendriksen writes, *The Pharisees had superimposed upon the law of God their own hair-splitting distinctions and rabbinical restrictions. This was true particularly with reference to the sabbath, ...* <sup>-{3}</sup>.

### 2. Jesus: God’s Way

- a. Hendriksen continues: *... Instead of looking upon it as a day of special consecration unto works of gratitude for the salvation which God had given, they viewed it as a day of cessation from all (common) work with a view to the salvation which man must merit. For them the sabbath meant idleness; for Christ it meant work. Nevertheless, for them it constituted hardship; for him, rest. As they saw it, man was made for the sabbath; as he knew it, the sabbath was made for man.*
- b. for as Jesus pointed out to them in verse 17, God’s work was always going on – Sabbath or no Sabbath
- c. and Jesus was doing the work of God, his own Father.
- d. to these verses and the following verses, Jesus dialogue with the Pharisees, we shall return, Lord willing, in a few weeks.

## E. Things to Learn

### 1. Working the Works of God

- a. Jesus brought to this man newness of life in a physical sense, and invited him to a newness of life in the spiritual sense, that he no longer continue in sinning – going his own way instead of God's way
- b. Jesus came to do the will of the One who sent Him – He came to do the works of God
- c. and He invites those who follow him to do the same

## 2. Our Part in God's Work

- a. the Son of Man is come to seek and to save those who are lost
- b. the Great Commission has passed that work on to His church
- c. it was Beatrice Bush Bixler who wrote these touching words

Great God, who gave Thine only Son,  
Help us – now Spirit led –  
To tell the story of Thy love  
To those who ask for bread;  
Then gladly will we go or send –  
Till this blest news has spread  
And they have been included  
In the breaking of the bread.

Lord, I would give them the Bread of Life,  
The Living Water too;  
My heart cries out, "O here am I –  
Ready Thy will to do!" –{4}.

- d. what part has God for you to do in working the works of God?

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|------|--|
| ASV  | American Standard Version of 1901  |
| AV   | Authorized (King James) Version of 1769  |
| NAS  | New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition) |
| NIV  | New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society                          |
| NLT  | New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust                                       |
| NKJV | New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers                                 |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ                   |
| WEY  | The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth                               |

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

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|---------|--|
| Bruce - | <i>The Gospel &amp; Epistles of John</i> , by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983                          |
| BM -    | <i>Biblical Museum</i> , Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870   |
| NICNT - | <i>The New International Commentary on the New Testament</i><br><i>The Gospel according to John</i> , by Leon Morris                               |
| NTC -   | <i>New Testament Commentary</i> , by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954  |
| RWP -   | <i>Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament</i> , by Dr. A. T. Robertson   |
| TEC -   | <i>The Gospel according to John</i> , by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965 |

2. NTC, *in loc*.

3. NTC, *in loc*.

4. '*The Breaking of the Bread*,' by Beatrice Bush Bixler, © Singspiration 1944, renewal 1972