

Twenty-One Days With John

Day 5 – John 5

Prayer: Lord, Jesus Christ, the testimony of John’s Gospel confirms You are the Christ. You are the Messiah. You are the chosen One of God. Indeed, You are God. Open my eyes, my heart, my mind and my soul to Your Word that I may marvel anew at the magnificent glory of Your love for me. Amen.

Meditation:

“Some time later.” Isn’t that how God often works in our lives? Consider the great number of those seeking healing at the Healing Pool of Bethesda. In Aramaic, the name “Bethesda” means “house of mercy.” There the weak, utterly helpless, the blind, lame, paralyzed and sick waited and waited for God’s mercy to come to them.

It was believed that whenever the water became “stirred” (John 5:4), that the water had healing powers. But only the first one to reach the water would be healed. For the crippled, blind, weak and paralyzed this was a hopeless task. They could not access the healing by their own efforts. They were totally helpless to receive God’s merciful healing.

Jesus came to Jerusalem during a Jewish Feast. Whether the Passover or another of the great feasts of the Jews, is not important. What is important is that Jesus saw the condition of the helpless invalid. But Jesus did not tell the invalid to go into the so-called healing waters. Instead, Jesus intervened. The man was healed instantly...on the Sabbath.

Isn’t it amazing how some people—even so-called “religious” people—can be so mean? The Jews, John noted, criticized Jesus for this healing and the man for carrying his mat, thus violating the Sabbath work restriction (John 5:9ff). Not only did Jesus’ merciful, miraculous healing enrage the Jews but, as John indicated in verse 18, it make them even more determined to kill Jesus. “How dare Jesus claim He was equal with God!” they shouted! (cf. John 5:18).

In what is initially a confusing section to the first-time reader (and others), what follows is one of the most remarkable testimonies Jesus gives about Himself. His testimony is unmistakable. Jesus truly is God. When one honors Jesus, they honor the Father. All who believe in Jesus shall have eternal life.

Yet the Jews continued their stubborn unbelief. To them, Jesus was a detestable menace, a blasphemer worthy of death. Jesus, unflinchingly remains firm in His testimony. He is not merely testifying to His own claim that He is God. So did John the Baptist, His Father in Heaven, and even the Jews’ own religious guru, Moses.

Would they believe Him who was the “Truth”? No. Even the testimony of many witnesses could not change their minds. They were in darkness. They would not believe. They would not believe God’s own words from God Himself. Instead, they would crucify the Lord of Glory, the Author of Life, God’s promised Messiah.

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God works miracles in our lives each day. He also extends His miraculous power to unbelievers as well. Will they believe? Only God knows. But one thing God does: He doesn't stop trying to reach even unbelievers. Instead, He keeps extending His kindness even to sinners.

If God works His kindness to others, why not you? Do you doubt God's power to heal in your life? After waiting years at the Bethesda's healing pool, he discovered that even after thirty-eight years, God hadn't forgotten him. No, in his healing he discovered that God was there all along...and would be there for Him forever.

God is there for you, too. If you ever forget that, just look to the cross. Look to Jesus. Hear His testimony. Look at His actions. These are not the actions of a mere human. They are the actions of God...for you and me.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

Your healing powers are recognized by all who give testimony to Your marvelous works. Help me recognize Your power to lead, direct and renew my life. Open my heart to hear Your words. Move my heart to learn of Your love and to love You more. Lord, You lovingly intervened and directed the life of the paralytic. Intervene, change and direct my life to joyfully serve Your gracious purposes. In Your name I pray, Amen.

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