

Unlooked For Mercy - John 5:1-16

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 00] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast. I will walk by faith and not by sight.

Good morning, everybody. Welcome to Calvary Chapel Charlotte. Beautiful day. Man, everybody's got sweatshirts. It's good.

You won't fall asleep. So if you turn to John chapter 5, as we continue through, it's a new month, the fifth month, and we're in the fifth chapter. We're right on track here with the way John's been going. One chapter a month. So I'm sure it will not speed up. There's so much good stuff. This is such an awesome section of scripture.

I love this. Jesus coming to the paralyzed man or without, the man without strength, the man who can't walk, the man at the pool of Bethesda. There's so much in here that you can bring out in the text. It's just a fun section of scripture to go through.

[1 : 34] And having now, as we've been going through John, you can just see how John, you know, his desire is to show us Christ that we might believe. He writes these things so that we might believe.

And we're seeing him just layer on and stack up these themes and ideas as they run through John. You notice I missed the microphone? That was pretty good. Practicing. But anyways, last week we finished up chapter four and we saw that Jesus had met with or the man from Capernaum, the nobleman who would have been one of Herod's, Herod the Tetrarch up in Galilee, someone attached to his household.

He comes to Jesus and he seeks help. We saw in John chapter four, verse 50, Jesus said in him, go your way, your son lives. And the man believed the word that Jesus has spoken unto him and he went his way.

And we saw how our crisis of faith is not over what Jesus can do or over who he is. We all know what he can do. We all know who he is. I hope. But it's over what he says. My crisis of faith in my life is over what he says.

Go your way, your son lives. There's no evidence. Nothing has changed. He just needed to respond to that. And when did he experience the fulfillment of those words? Man, as he went on his way in faith and obedience, as he continued in faith and obedience.

[2 : 51] We'll see that theme again, even more this week. As we continue in faith and obedience, it's then he saw the fulfillment of Jesus's words in his life. As you and I go our way in faith and obedience, we'll experience all kinds of opportunities to see Jesus's unlooked for mercy, to see his signs and wonders, to see his word playing out in our life.

But it's only as we continue in faith and obedience. We're going to look at that today. We're going to look at unlooked for mercy. We have, in the last chapter, where this man with need went to Jesus. In this chapter, we're going to see a man who had great need who Jesus goes to. And I couldn't find any slide that just made me think of unlooked for. Or something like, you know, so this one kind of, you know, we have a cat and he's definitely unlooked for mercy in his life.

So I figured that was appropriate. So we've seen some recent themes in John. We're going to see these carry through. We saw that Jesus was not prevented by man's limited understanding. Man's limited understanding did not prevent Jesus. We saw that right from the beginning, whether it was when his apostles first come, John the Baptist's disciples, and they come to Jesus. They have such limited understanding.

[4 : 06] Through Nicodemus, his understanding of Jesus. The woman at the well. But the limited understanding these people had, it did not prevent Jesus from working in their lives. We saw this theme where Jesus uses physical need to reveal deeper spiritual need in people.

We saw that very clearly with the woman at the well, and then with the nobleman and his son. He uses physical need to reveal a deeper spiritual need. And lastly, the theme that we see is Jesus is drawn to need.

Jesus is like drawn like a magnet to need. Right? He said, I did not come for the righteous, but sinners. Right? That it is not the whole that needs a physician, but the sick.

And Jesus is drawn to need. Last week, we saw need come to Jesus. The need came to Jesus. The need sought Jesus. And the need initiated fulfillment with Jesus.

This week, we're going to see where Jesus comes to need. Jesus seeks out need. And Jesus is the one who initiates the fulfillment. So if we pick up here in John chapter 5.

[5 : 12] If you remember, Jesus is up in Galilee at this point. He's gone up there from his time down in Jerusalem. He's passed through Samaria. He now arrives in Galilee.

And that's where the man from Capernaum comes as he shows up in Cana. Jesus will make his headquarters in Capernaum, down by the Sea of Galilee. Verse 1 of chapter 5. And John says, after this, there was a feast of the Jews.

You think, well, wasn't he just at that feast? Well, there's a whole lot that happens here. If you read the other Gospels, Matthew and Mark and Luke, there's a whole lot Jesus is doing in Galilee that John's not covering. Because John's goal isn't to give us necessarily a chronological, historical events of Jesus' life.

His goal is what? That we read. That we believe. So there's a whole lot that happens. And then Jesus, it says, he goes up again to the feast. The feast of who? The Jews.

Just like in John chapter 2, it was the Jews' Passover. Jesus is going to this place. Even though at this point, the religious hierarchy had, in a sense, taken God's word and was using it to their own ends.

[6 : 19] So it was not the Lord's feast. It was the feast of the Jews. But it's interesting how Jesus, he will go and participate with the religious, with the sinners.

This doesn't matter. Because his purpose is the same. To do what? Accomplish his Father's will. And whether it's with the religious, whether it's with sinners, it doesn't matter who it is.

Jesus is going to go. And he's not worried about public opinion either. I don't know if I want to go back to Jerusalem. What are they going to think of me? I flipped those tables last time. Nope. He's heading up there.

To accomplish his Father's will. Excuse me. Verse 2. And there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep gate, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda.

Having five porches. And here is a redesign of what that would have been like at that time. And so you can see that you have the Antonia Fortress. You have the northern wall of the temple.

[7 : 17] Remember that they built the Antonia Fortress to overlook into the temple so that they could kind of keep an eye on everyone in the temple. And then you have right near there this pool of Bethesda. Bethesda means house of mercy.

And the Hebrew tongue is Bethesda, meaning house of mercy. And it has five porches. It's a lot of porches for one house. Porches just means a portico, a place of sheltering.

There's five of them. In Scripture, numbers have meanings. Numbers implicate certain ideas, right? We're not into numerology. But there are numbers throughout Scripture that have certain implications.

Seven, right? The whole number. The number of perfection. The number of God. Six, the number of man. Man can never quite get to seven. And five, you'll see, a lot of times refers to grace. Here is that today, what the ruins look like at the pool of Bethesda there.

So you have five, which is meaning pointing towards grace, the number of grace. And so you have this house of mercy with five places to be sheltered at the sheep gate.

[8 : 26] The place where the sheep come in to this pool. And so here we have a place full of needy sheep seeking mercy and grace. That's what they're doing there. All of these people that we're going to find there.

Matthew chapter 18, Jesus will say in verses 12 and 13. If a man have a hundred sheep and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine and go into the mountains and seek that which is gone astray?

And if so be that he find it, truly I say unto you, he rejoices more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. So excited over finding that one. And here's a place where we're going

to see a bunch of needy sheep seeking mercy and grace at this house of mercy.

Verse three. And in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, of halt, of withered, of waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water. Whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

[9 : 37] So there seems to be there's an account here of this miraculous event that happened at certain times. It's funny when you read different commentaries, you know, well, this is just a, you know, just a legend or just a tradition or just.

Listen, Jesus came from the dead, right? He's going to resurrect me. I mean, if he wants to send an angel in trouble, the water, I don't see why it's such a hard thing to accept. John writes it like it's a fact.

So we're going to take it as that. The certain season, the word there, certain season, seems to indicate that it's only at a certain time. And it seems like the idea is that at this season of the feast, the sick and infirm gathered at this pool hoping to win the healing lottery.

Hoping they might be the one, you know, to get into the water when all of a sudden the jacuzzi turns on. They were waiting mercy and grace. But look who it was who was waiting here.

We have the impotent folk, those without strength. The blind, those without sight. The halt, those without a walk. And the withered, those without wholeness.

[10 : 46] Man, isn't that the same in our world today? There are a bunch of herding sheep, herding people, waiting mercy and grace. They're without strength. They're without sight. They're without a walk. And they're without wholeness. They're waiting for the moving of the water.

They're waiting for a visible sign that mercy had come. These troubled people, with their troubled lives, were hoping that this troubled water would somehow bring some type of peace to their life.

The word here at the end of verse 4, where it says that they might be made whole. Whole is like sound, so sound in body. Their hope of wholeness, it was based upon what, though?

Man, it was based upon their own effort. Their self-effort. Look what it says. It's whoever gets there first. It's based on their position. It's based on their power.

And it's based on what they see, their perception. But the thing with self-effort is, it always leaves the greatest need unmet. Who are the people with the greatest need there? We're going to meet a man who's been here 38 years.

[11 : 52] 38 years. He never found anyone to chuck them into the water. You know, just drag me down there and get me in. Who's the guy who's going to get in there first? Probably the one who's, maybe he's got like, I got this like disease in my eye or I've got a broken arm or whatever.

Boom. They're going to get there first. That's what self-effort does. It leaves the greatest need unmet because it can't meet it. It just can't do it. It has no position.

It has no power. But they're basing this on what they see and what they can do. Whoever gets there first, they win that healing lottery. We live in a world where those with no strength, with no sight, without a walk are hoping that by some miracle, all the trouble in their lives will somehow add up to soundness.

Well, maybe if I take my troubled life and I mix it with the troubled water and somehow all of these troubles, hopefully we'll end up in some type of wonderful, peaceful retirement.

They're hoping that all of their troubles will miraculously end up as something sound, something whole. But it's based on their own efforts.

[12 : 59] It's based on their own perception. And so all of these people seem to be there because of the feast almost. I mean, maybe they're there at all times, but it seems like at a certain season, at this specific time, like it's packed.

There's a lot of people there. A lot of people that are in great need at this pool. And there was a certain man there. Remember in the last chapter, we saw there was a certain man in Capernaum, a certain nobleman.

The idea is it's a specific one. This is who this person is. Oh, it's that nobleman attached to Herod. Okay. Well, there's a certain man there.

And what's this man's identity? His identity is his infirmity. 38 years he has been infirm. Infirm means weakness, frailty, feeble.

So for 38 years, this man's infirmity, it prevented his walk. He can't walk. It defined who he was and it left him without hope or help. For 38 years, this guy couldn't walk.

[14 : 03] Destroyed his walk. Proverbs 13, 12 says, Imagine this guy for 38 years.

How many times has he seen the water troubled? I don't know. He's thinking, oh, maybe, maybe. What a disappointment. What a gut punch. Maybe it took him a while and he finally got a closed spot.

Maybe he could just like roll himself into the water and someone else gets in first. And he sees him rejoicing and I'm healed for 38 years. This man, his infirmity, his feebleness, his weakness, the frailty of his own abilities has prevented his walk.

It's defined who he was. Oh, I know him. Yeah. We all know about him. You know what's wrong in his life? You know what he got into? And left him without hope or help.

Now, somehow he got there. Somehow he went there and somehow he was taken home and he's got a bed. He has to be carried on. So someone would get him there, but nobody stayed with him. Man's ability only goes so far.

[15 : 11] Then we have this just in verse six, when Jesus saw him, where'd Jesus come from?

What's Jesus doing there? I know what Jesus is going to do. He's going to, and they'll all be healed, right?

What is Jesus doing there? When Jesus saw him lie and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, will you be made whole?

And the idea seems to be that this man, he doesn't see Jesus. He doesn't know Jesus is there.

Next thing you know, Jesus is talking to him like, hey, will you be made whole? Well, this man was so focused on his own need and his own perception of the solution for that need, and he didn't even see Jesus was there.

He missed Jesus. There's some things we can infer here from the scripture regarding Jesus and his approach. Jesus came to this man in a way that was unlooked for, uncalled for, and unannounced. Jesus comes to this man. He's not looking for Jesus. Jesus, not in the way that we would think you'd look for Jesus. He's just looking for someone maybe who can help him in the water. Did he call for him? Like in the previous chapter, you know, okay, there's a need.

[16 : 23] I'm going to Jesus. No, this guy, he didn't go to Jesus. And he came unannounced. It wasn't like the Trump, Jesus is here, everybody. Fantastic. Jesus is here. He's going to fix everything.

No, he just, he's just there. But Jesus, when he comes, he comes with purpose. In Luke 4, verse 18, Jesus, as we've read in the last chapter, when he said, a prophet is not without honor except in his own home.

In Luke 4, it's when he's in his own home, his own town in Nazareth, and he goes to the synagogue. And he says, the spirit of the Lord is upon me, as he reads from the scroll in Isaiah. Because he's anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind.

To set at liberty them that are bruised. So yes, Jesus, he wasn't looked for, he wasn't called, and he wasn't announced, but he came with a purpose. And what else do we see here? We see that when Jesus saw him, he knew.

Jesus saw this man, he knew this man, and he was completely aware of his condition. Jesus understood it. This guy didn't know Jesus was watching him. He didn't know Jesus was there.

[17 : 34] And he didn't know Jesus was aware of his condition. What does Jesus do? He sees, he understands, and what does he do next? He speaks.

He speaks. Jesus sees. He knows, he understands, and he will speak into our situation. Interesting, he did not ask the man how he would be made whole.

Simply if he was willing. He says, hey, I've got an idea. I'm going to sit here. As soon as that water goes, you know, I'm God. I'm the son of God. And I'm just going to launch you into that water.

Would you be made whole? What's this man thinking? Okay, finally. Someone's going to come, and he's going to stay with me. Because this is how this is going to work. This is the only way this works. He did not ask how he would be made whole.

He simply asked if he was willing. The question then was not one of soundness of body or soundness of ability, but he was asking the man of the soundness of his faith, of his belief.

[18 : 40] He didn't say, hey, we're going to work together. I need you to kind of like roll to the left. And I'm going to, no, it wasn't a question of soundness of body or ability, but a belief. You know, I hear Jesus's words, and how many times do I instantly receive them based on my ability and my

soundness?

Well, Lord, I can't do that. Lord, that's, I don't have, I'm not that sound. You know, I don't, I don't have that ability. That's not me. In the word here in the, in the text in the Greek for wilt, in the old King James, wilt thou be made whole, or will you be made whole, has the idea of three definitions within it?

Willingness, desire, and faith, or belief. So a sound heart responds to the sound of God's word with willingness, with faith, with desire.

So when he says to the man, do you want to be whole? It's not just like, hey, you know, do you want to be better? Oh yeah, I do. No, he's asking him. The choice is offered here based upon Jesus's ability, not this man's ability, but is he willing?

Does he desire it? Does he have faith? The impotent man, and impotent means the one without strength. In verse seven, the one without strength answered him, sir.

[20 : 01] And there it is again, that word, sir. We saw that in John chapter four with the woman at the well. We saw that with the nobleman in Capernaum. Sir, they each get to this point where they say, sir, master, Lord, the one who speaks with authority.

Sir, I have no man. I can't afford anyone. When the water is troubled, there's no man to put me into the pool. But while I am coming, and it's a sad, sad statement.

Another steps down before me. The man can't walk. And he says, while I am coming, what must that have looked like? The man desperately dragging himself, trying to somehow get to this place of miraculous healing, wanting a touch from God, wanting a visible sign of mercy in his life.

He can't walk. He says, when I am coming. How many times has he dragged himself, trying to drag himself away from his infirmity? But what happens, that silly infirmity won't leave him.

For 38 years, it stays with him. His perception here of help and healing, they were limited by man's ability. He recognized something in Jesus.

[21 : 11] He says, sir, how? This man's greatest efforts have always come up short to this point. What does Jesus' questions reveal?

We've seen him ask questions all throughout the text here in John. What do his questions reveal? They always reveal a deeper infirmity than what the person coming to him at first assumes is the issue.

They reveal man's deeper infirmity. This man's deeper infirmity was what? His hope was in man's ability. Jesus had to draw that out. Your hope is still in man's ability. Your hope in me, as Jesus is saying, your hope in me essentially, is based on what you perceive as possible.

But man's greatest efforts, they always come up short. What did Jesus need to do then? He needed this man to understand that there was no man. What a phrase here in this verse.

Sir, I have no man. Right. Right. Jesus says, yes, you got it. There was no man because no man could do what only God could do. Only God can satisfy our deepest needs.

[22 : 16] Only God can satisfy the deep infirmities that we have. So this man is seeking to understand Jesus's words through his own narrow lens of ability.

He receives Jesus's words. He's recognizing something about Jesus. Sir. But how is he receiving those words? Just through his own narrow lens of ability. Second Corinthians 2.14 says, now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ and makes manifest the savor or the aroma of his knowledge by us in every place.

Well, I don't have that ability. I'm not sufficient for that. How am I going to do that? How am I going to make him known in every place? How am I going to always triumph in victory?

I don't understand that. Well, yeah, because I'm limiting through my narrow lens of my abilities. I'm limiting Jesus to what he wants to do. What he's declared is true. Jesus now says to the man, you might think, well, this man responded in unbelief.

Sir, I don't have anyone. It's not going to work. Just as last week, it looked like that nobleman responded in faith. Come and heal my son. And Jesus knew, oh, there's a deeper need here.

You're only going to believe if you see.

[23 : 34] But you need to trust my word. For this guy, it would look like it's unbelief. Well, how's this going to happen? How's this going to work? But what does Jesus see? Jesus sees that there's a willing heart to receive what Jesus has to offer.

And Jesus said unto him, rise, take up your bed and walk. Now, we're covering this section of scripture in 40 some minutes, right?

I think this was really fast. I think Jesus showed up and just kind of said, hey, will you be made whole? Well, yeah, but nobody's going to, nobody, I have no one to throw me into the water. Arise, take up your bed and walk. And Jesus walks away. Because we're going to find out this guy doesn't even know who Jesus is. That quick. Boom. Jesus said unto him, rise, take up your bed and walk.

That is impossible. God's word is asking this man to do the impossible. But faith always demands the impossible.

[24 : 36] Faith demands the impossible. Faith doesn't demand the possible. It demands the impossible. That's why it's faith. My trust is in God who's able. Now, oh yeah, I trust God.

I trust God, but I do it all myself. I got this. No, faith demands the impossible. The things that God asks us to do, we're never going to be able to do apart from him. He's not going to ask us to do something we can do in our own ability.

But he will always ask us to do something we can do in his ability. Faith demands the impossible. God's word asks us to respond in what? Faith and obedience. Faith and obedience to the reality that it speaks.

Jesus just spoke reality. Rise, take up your bed and walk. That is reality. That man's not yet experienced that. But God's word speaks reality. Jesus said to this man, rise up with a strength you do not possess.

Take up what's too heavy for you and walk to where you cannot go. That's what he said to this man. Zechariah 4, 6 says, it's not by might.

[25 : 38] It's not by power. It's by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Rise up with a strength you do not possess. Take up what is too heavy for you and walk to where you cannot go.

So, this man's response will be based not on his ability, but upon who Jesus is in his mind, in his heart, in his belief.

Interesting, though, that Jesus did not say to him, rise, leave your bed behind, and go your way. He said to take it. Take up your bed.

He didn't tell him to leave it, but to carry it. Why? Because this man would not be carried by that any longer. By faith now, he's going to carry the thing that once carried him.

This man is now going to be carried by faith. You see, faith changes my relationship with my infirmities. Completely will change this man's relationship with his infirmity. The thing that once bound him, identified him, and carried him about, now he is the one who carries that about.

[26 : 46] Remember in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, as Paul is writing and he's talking about his infirmity in the flesh. He's like, I have prayed three times for this. And it's not just like, Lord, please take it away. Lord, please take it away.

You know, he's not waiting for the troubling of the water. Paul was praying for this. Like, Lord, I have sought you three times for this. The Lord gives him a beautiful answer. It changes Paul's relationship to his infirmity.

He said, Paul, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, Paul says, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

As the power of Christ essentially rested on this man, what did he do? He gloried in that infirmity. He's like, yeah, I got this bed. I'll carry this bed. Does faith forget the past?

You know what? That infirmity, I'm going to pretend it never happened. We'll just pretend it wasn't there. I've always walked. Aren't you the guy that for 38 years was struggling with? Nope, that wasn't me. I've always been like this. I'm perfect.

[27 : 46] I'm fine. It doesn't forget the past. It carries it forward as a testimony to God's deliverance. Jesus said to this man, you take out that bed and you go. And you know this man's carrying that bed.

Remember me? 38 years. Yep, 38 years. It carries it forward as a testimony of God's deliverance. It no longer defines him. It declares that God is greater. It declares that God has worked in his life. What does God's word give this man? Jesus says to him, rise, take up your bed and walk. Rise. It gives him power. God's word gives him a purpose. Take up your bed and it gives him progress. It gives him a walk. Power, purpose, and progress come from God's word. And the man immediately, immediately, the man was made whole. And he took up his bed and walked.

Which came first? Healing or faith? Immediately, he was made whole. Well, okay. Jesus said, take up your bed and walk. Was it that he believed and he was healed?

[28 : 48] Was he healed and believed? Which came first? God's word. God's word came first. God's word is the one that came first. I don't know. Assuming he believed, he responded.

It says immediately he was made whole and took up his bed. Which happened first? God's word. God's word comes first. You know, there's times you pray and it seems like before you even get it out of your mouth, Lord, could you?

And he answers. You're like, wow. Thank you, Lord. You unplugged the toilet. What a blessing. Before I even need to do anything. You know, there's things in your life where you pray and you're like, Lord, you know there's this need.

And you find out as you're praying, like he's already had answered it. It's like, wow. And there's some things you just pray and pray and pray. And it seems like it can take 38 years. God, why won't you answer this prayer?

I am. I'm answering that prayer. Which comes first? Healing your faith. God's word. That's what comes first. As God's word speaks into our life, that's what speaks reality.

[29 : 44] We act in faith upon that, not upon results. We do not seek results. We seek the word. When we seek the word, we just let the results come, whatever they are. They'll have their timing.

They have their place. So God's word, it made this man sound. He was whole. Made him strong. He could carry his bed. And he had to walk. It made him stable. God's word did that for this man. This man, as we've been talking about spiritual experiences, as we've seen Jesus healing, this man had a spiritual experience.

But it was according to what? God's word. According to God's word. His spiritual experience, it followed faith in the word. His spiritual experience then validated his faith in the word.

And his spiritual experience then encouraged faith in his word. In God's word. The experience came after God's word. But then when it came, according to God's word, whoa, that experience totally validated my faith in God's word.

[30 : 48] God, I didn't need that experience, but thank you for it. And then what does it do? It encourages faith in the word. The next time God's word comes to me and tells me, do this impossible thing, I'm going to think, well, you know, I got that bed leaning up in the garage.

I'm going to go out there and look at that. Remember what God did. Man, if he could do that, then he can do this next impossible thing. God gives us valid spiritual experiences based in his word to encourage our faith, to strengthen our faith.

Ephesians 11, 6, or Hebrews 11, 6 says, What without faith, it's impossible to please him. For he that comes to God must believe that he is able. He is.

And that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. It's his ability. It's his timing. It's his plan. And then at the end of our verse 9 here, it says, this little footnote, And on the same day was the Sabbath.

Boom, boom, boom, boom. What does that mean? Well, at this point in time, the religious hierarchy within Israel had co-opted the law and used it for their own form of religion and self-righteousness.

[32 : 04] The law was never intended to make a man righteous. But they had then, through rabbinical teaching, had taken it and said, Well, we are going to use the law to make our own system of declaring us righteous.

Now, the law would never declare you righteous. That's what religion does. It will always declare them righteous, but never you. Because the problem with religion, it needs a standard that has to have someone who's not meeting it to make me feel good like I am meeting it.

Grace doesn't do that. Grace just says, none of us meet this. Come freely to the one who has.

Religion will always have a hierarchy of, you're not good enough. I am good enough.

Because the only way I can validate myself is based on your failure and my own ability. So essentially, they've taken the Sabbath and the law and used it to validate their own system of religion.

But originally, the Sabbath day was a sign. It's simply a sign for Israel that identified them as the Lord's chosen nation. We read this when we were in Exodus. Exodus 31, 13.

[33 : 02] Speak thou, Lord, speaking to Moses. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Truly my Sabbath you shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you

may know that I am the Lord that does sanctify you.

So the Sabbath, originally the Sabbath day, was just an identifying day for Israel, identifying them as God's people. But the idea of rest is one of God's attributes that's built into the very fabric of creation.

On the seventh day, God ended his work, which he had made. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had made. Did God stop working? No. It says he just rested from the work, which he had made.

He ceased creating. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it, he had rested from all his work, which God created and made. This is something God built into creation by his very nature.

Now, God is always at work. It's not like he stops and the universe ceases to exist. But he built it into creation, this attribute. And ultimately, it is entered into fully into Christ, through Christ.

[34 : 14] Hebrews chapter 4, verses 10 and 11. For he that has entered into Jesus's rest, he also has ceased from our own labors, his own labors, his own works, as God did from his.

Excuse me. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. So God wants us to enter into rest.

But what is the rest based on? Faith. We don't enter if we have unbelief. This is not talking about salvation. This is talking about a rest. That is, I'm ceasing from my own labors and efforts to establish myself in my abilities and relationship with God.

I'm going to enter into rest, into his rest. He says, let us labor. Us who are believers, we've entered into Christ. But man, don't fail to enter into his rest. It allows us to cease from our own efforts.

So as a church, does the church keep the Sabbath? No. The church does not keep a Sabbath day, but we are to live Sabbath lives. Israel had a day.

[35 : 18] We're to live Sabbath lives because we are in Christ. Galatians 2.20, the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The life I live now is meant to be a Sabbath life, a life that is entered into rest, that ceases from my own labors and my own works. So do we have a specific day?

Is it commanded to us? No, it's not. But it's an attribute built into creation. There's a day of rest built into the very fabric of creation. And then in Christ, our lives are to be lives that are Sabbath lives. But this man is healed on the Sabbath day, and heaven forbid, he then takes up his bed, which would be considered work, and carries it on the Sabbath. And the Jews therefore said unto him that was cured.

Whenever you see the Jews, as John references them with this title, it refers to the religious leaders. It's not just the common people. He's referring specifically to religious leaders. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured.

[36 : 20] The word cured is to restore. The one who has been restored, it is the Sabbath day. It's not lawful for you to carry your bed. Now you know the religious leaders were not the ones who were in at the pool of Bethesda.

They should have been. They should have been there, trying to help people into the water, trying to minister to them. But we see that this, the pool of Bethesda is very close to the temple precinct, and so they see him walking, carrying his bed, and they said, hey you, it's not lawful for you to carry that.

Now John is going three, going to three times put in front of these men, the idea that this man's been healed. Here it says, they said unto him that was restored, it's not lawful for you to carry your bed.

And you think the guy's probably like, but yeah, 38 years I've been laying on this bed, right? You're not even going to ask about that? You're not even going to ask, why, how am I carrying this bed? Just, just, nope.

They will not. These religious leaders, the religion has blinded them to this man's restoration, and that's what religion does. It never acknowledges true restoration. It will never, never acknowledge it.

[37 : 30] When I say religion, what am I referencing? Well, this is my definition I'm giving in light of the context of our scripture today. Religion equals man's efforts to manage his spiritual infirmity.

Man's own efforts to manage his own spiritual infirmity. Now I cannot acknowledge true restoration because my own ability can never manage and can never restore me spiritually, my spiritual infirmity.

And if I see someone who truly is restored, what does that mean? That means that my system's not good enough. That I'm not good enough. And my religion's failed. So I can never fully acknowledge restoration in a religion because it will completely undermine the system that I'm trying to live by. And you see that all throughout the gospels, that they will not acknowledge true restoration. They will not acknowledge Jesus. Essentially, they are saying to this guy, listen, it's great. You're healed. But we would prefer if you were not restored, if you didn't receive mercy, if you had no walk and you had no faith, we would prefer to manage and maintain your infirmity and actually see you restored.

[38 : 37] Religion would prevent his walk, would prevent him experiencing mercy, would prevent faith, and would prevent restoration. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus will say, full well, you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition.

To reject God's words, so that I can keep my tradition. And here we see that religion would undermine faith. And this will be one of the things that Jesus, when he does his, in Matthew 23, the woes that he goes through to the Pharisees.

This is one of his first woe. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in.

Their religion is undermining faith. They would much, they would much rather prefer this man. Just stay over there and firm. We can deal with that. And now he answers them.

And here John says in verse 11, he answered them, he that made me whole, boys, he that made me sound, the one who cured me, the one who restored me, you're focusing on the wrong thing.

[39 : 51] The same said unto me, take up your bed and walk. This man understood that Jesus was not the problem. He was the solution. Religion will see Jesus as the problem.

Faith sees Jesus as the solution. This man has experienced the life-changing effects of God's word in his life. He responded to God's word and faith and obedience.

And now what's he doing with God's word? He's elevating it to a place of authority in his life. He says, listen, the one who said unto me, take up your bed and walk. He's the one I'm going to follow. His word, his voice is the highest voice now. Why? Because he experienced God's word, changed his life. He obeyed it. He saw the results. And he's now elevated that to a place in his life where that is the final authority.

That is what has say. The reality of God's word at work in his life caused him to see the word, not as just one among many, but as the highest word above all authorities.

[40 : 52] First Peter 1.25 says, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospels preached unto you. That word, we experienced the life-changing effect of God's word in our life by that gospel.

We have obeyed it in faith and obedience and we should elevate it. We should elevate it to a point in our life and a place in our life that is the highest voice. Man, has Jesus restored you?

Has he made you sound? He has me. What other voice has done that? Then ask they him, well, what man is this which said unto you, take up your bed and walk?

Okay, I mean, this is such an amazing life-changing event. Who was it? What man? The religion could not elevate Jesus to any more than a man.

All right, well, it's some man. All right, well, Jesus is a nice man. He's a good man, a miraculous man, but he's still a man. Well, what man is this which did this? No man, as we know from verse seven.

[42 : 03] This was a genuine and true spiritual experience. You know, I think we live, I know, we live in a world that has attributed so many things to God, to his word, and to his spirit that are not true spiritual experiences.

And I hope that we have discernment to see that. And I think we do. I think we do a good job of that. But it's just as wrong to overlook a genuine spiritual experience as it is to seek after false ones. Just as wrong to overlook a genuine spiritual experience. Say, well, I'm not going to be, I'm not going to be taken in by those charlatans. I'm not going to think that, well, I'll have some, ooh, spiritual experience. No.

Well, then what do we do? We reject every spiritual experience. We reject everything that God wants to do. It's just as wrong to overlook the genuine as it is to seek after the false ones. So how can I condemn the person, the brother, the sister, that's seeking after signs and wonders, and yet

I'm over here not willing to see Jesus capable of anything in my life that I can't explain. We need to be careful that our religion, our system of interacting with Jesus, that it leaves room for the moving of the Spirit in our experience with Him. We read it in John chapter 3, describing the Holy Spirit, Jesus said to Nicodemus, the wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but you can't tell once it comes and where it goes.

[43 : 24] So is everyone that's born of the Spirit. Now, it's not saying that the most spontaneous people you know are the most spiritual people you know. Like, oh, oh, oh, they just got blown by the wind and there they go. It's not what it's saying. It's saying they're very responsive to the blowing of the wind.

Very responsive. Hey, that wind's blowing from a different direction than what I'm used to. Lord, you've always blown this way in my life, and all of a sudden you're blowing from the other direction. I can't tell where it comes from or where it's going.

I'm going to hold on tight and dig in. And the wind blows and it's trying to move me. Nope, not me. No way. No spiritual experiences here. Man, we need to be careful that we leave room for the moving of the Spirit.

But the moving of the Spirit is always in response to what? Word of God. The Word of God. And here we have our third word. So we had the one who was cured, he was restored.

The one who was made whole, he was made sound. And he that was healed did not know who he was. And this is our three words as he's talking to these Pharisees or these religious Jews and they just don't see it.

[44 : 28] And he that was healed, well, he didn't know who he was. For Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. To convey himself away, that phrase means to avoid or to withdraw.

And Jesus avoided the multitude. I mean, Jesus, what are you doing? You just healed the guy. Now is the time to say, look what Jesus did for me. He'll do it all for you too.

Come on, we're gonna have a big healing revival. We're gonna do this. We're all gonna be healed here. Why did he do that? Because mercy in this house of mercy, Bethesda, it never seeks notoriety.

Mercy simply seeks to bring people into real life-changing contact with Jesus. Simply seeks to bring people into contact with Jesus. And here we see this man, his understanding of Jesus is very limited.

I don't even know who he is. But did that limited understanding prevent a life-changing event? It didn't. His limited understanding did not prevent this life-altering experience with Jesus.

[45 : 34] My limited understanding of Jesus and how he wants to operate and work in my life, it will not prevent life-altering events. What is my part? I have to respond in faith and obedience to the word.

Maybe it's blowing in a direction I'm not used to. Maybe it's asking me to do the impossible. Jesus had done for this man what no other man or system of religion had yet been able to accomplish.

Why weren't the religious Jews there? Because they couldn't do anything. They knew their religion was empty. Their religion was only good for one thing, making themselves feel good.

It didn't help anybody else. What were they going to do there? Oh, Rabbi, pray for me. I don't have a real relationship with God myself. How can I pray for you? I'm not even going into heaven.

How can I help you there? If we're not willing to open ourselves up to the reality of God moving in our life, how can I encourage someone else to do that? Hey, God wants to move in your life.

[46 : 38] What has he done in your life? Well, not too much. I'm a little afraid. So, I stay laying on that bed of infirmity. I stay in a system that limits Jesus to that of a man.

This man knew enough of Jesus and he knew enough of men to know what was real. And he knew that Jesus had changed his life. Here we see this man's understanding of Jesus grows in proportion to his faith and obedience to Jesus' word.

Verse 14, afterwards, now Jesus finds him. Jesus comes and looks for him. He finds him in the temple. Jesus came to this man only after his walk had been tested.

He was healed. Then he goes and is tested. The walk, the faith is tested. And then Jesus comes to him after that testing. Where does he find him?

Oh, man, I'm healed. I'm going to go home and tell my family. I can't wait. Wait till they see me come walking in. He finds him where? In the temple. This is the first time in 38 years this man has

worshipped.

[47 : 48] He's healed and right away where does he want to go? He doesn't know Jesus. He doesn't know Jesus is Messiah, the Son of God, but he's healed. And a true spiritual experience always leads to worship. Always.

He'll never elevate a man. Even Jesus himself said, no, this isn't about me per se. I don't want my name attached to this as just a miracle worker.

It leads to worship. worship. What did this man now have that he not had before? He had a walk. He had a witness that had been tested and he had worship.

Jesus knew there was a greater need than freeing this man from his infirmity. Look what his infirmity seems to be attached to here. And he said unto him, Jesus said unto him, behold, thou art made whole.

The idea here is this isn't temporary and you're not going to lose it. Like, what if I do something wrong and all of a sudden, no, no, I knew it. I should have read my Bibles 20 minutes today instead of 15. Now Jesus is going to take away all the good things he's doing in my life.

[48 : 53] Behold, you are made whole. It's a definitive statement. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. Sin no more. Meaning, his infirmity seems to be the fact that whatever he had done, his sin, had led to this point.

Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you. So there was a greater need than just freeing this man from the result of his sin. It's original sin that led him to 38 years of being stuck in this infirmity. God, take this infirmity. I'm sorry. I wish I never got into that. Now for 38 years it's been attached to my life. Jesus knew there was a greater need and it was to free him not just from the result but from the source of sin.

Jesus is the solution for both. Jesus could free this man from the results of that sin in his life and Jesus could free him from the source of sin. He's the only one who can.

His self-effort was not going to keep him. God's word had delivered him. God's word would deliver him and if he continued to follow in faith and obedience God's word would continually deliver him.

[50 : 00] You know, it's pretty silly and I've seen it many times in people's lives and I've done it in my own life. It's pretty silly when Jesus rescues us from the cliff's edge only then to jump back on the same path that led us to that edge.

We do it again and again. How silly for Jesus to have rescued this man, healed him from his infirmity that was a result of sin to then dive into another sin.

How silly. And Jesus rescues me as I'm clinging from the cliff's edge. I'm sorry Lord I shouldn't have come this road and he pulls us back and he sets us down. Thank you Lord we set out in the same path.

How silly. And he found this man worshiping. He found him in the temple and said behold you're made whole sin no more lest a worse thing come unto you.

God's mercy in our life isn't just for the past it's not just for the moment we find ourselves in. God's mercy is for the future to keep us from things that are so much worse than we have any idea are coming.

[51 : 04] He knows. That's why we have to be sensitive to his word to our response to his word and to how he's moving us how he's blowing in our lives what direction is he moving us. The path we're on may look safe but he knows where it leads.

And the man now departs and told the Jews that it was Jesus which he had made whole. Oh now he's going to go rat Jesus out is he? I don't think so. Some of the commentaries read him like oh now he was trying to get in good with the religious Jews and didn't want to be kicked out of the temple so he wasn't told on Jesus.

I don't think so. I think he wants to go and tell. I think he's faithfully giving an answer for the hope that is in him. 1 Peter 3 15 Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

I think he's like I found him. I'm sure you guys want to know. You're the religious Jews. Of course you want to know who's healing me. Of course you want to know who this guy is. Listen he's more than just a healer. I know who he is.

He's something so much more in my life. This man did not let someone else's potential reaction keep him from acting in genuine faith and obedience.

[52 : 17] We shouldn't either. We can't let someone's potential reaction well I don't know if I tell him that. I share the gospel with him. I say praise the Lord they're going to look at me funny. What might their reaction be?

Well I don't know. This man most likely was put out of the temple. Like you're going to follow Jesus you're out of here. We cannot let others potential reactions keep us from acting in genuine faith and obedience.

This man now knew Jesus. He knew his name. He knew his nature. And he had experienced the nearness of Jesus. I love this verse in relation to this scripture.

It gives me goosebumps. Romans 10 15 And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written think of it in relation to this man. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.

This man's feet never had done that before. How beautiful. This man has a walk. This man now can go and he can tell. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.

[53 : 24] It doesn't say how beautiful if people respond to them. If people receive it. How beautiful to be those who bring glad tidings of good things.

what good things has Jesus done in your life? Do you have any glad tidings? And we'll end here for today in verse 16. And therefore because of this terrible event because they found out it was Jesus who healed this man on the Sabbath and he walked on the Sabbath carrying his bed.

Did the Jews persecute Jesus? Persecute means to chase to put to flight. And they sought to slay him because he had done these things on the Sabbath day. They essentially hounded Jesus.

They persecuted him. They hounded him. They dogged him to silence him. To keep him quiet. How would you kill the source of life?

How do you kill one who can make another whole? How do you do that? It's like when Jesus raises Lazarus. They're like, oh, we need to kill him. I'm like, what? That just seems counterintuitive.

[54 : 34] We got to kill Lazarus. Put him back in the grave. How do you kill the source of wholeness in your life? You silence the word of God. How do you kill that source of sound words and sound doctrine in your life?

The source of soundness. Man, you silence God's word. You silence his word and you'll kill it. And ultimately, that's what religion will always seek to do, to silence the word of God because it knows that both cannot exist together.

The religious Jews realize that either their religion or God's word would ultimately be silenced in one of them. They cannot exist together. And unfortunately, these religious Jews, when Jesus said to the man, wilt you be made whole?

Do you have willingness? Do you have faith? Do you have desire? For these men, unfortunately, they lacked the willingness, they lacked the faith, and they lacked the desire to be loosed from their unsoundness.

For you and I, as we look back to Hebrews 4, let us therefore fear. Let us take note of this. Lest a promise being left of us, lest a promise being left of us of entering into his rest, any of you just seem to come short of it.

[55 : 49] And there's a promise left to us. Take heed. Let us give haste and diligence. That word there means in the Greek. Let us give haste and diligence, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Maybe this morning, you're like, man, I want that. I want to enter that rest. But you know what? Man, I lack strength. I lack sight. I lack a walk.

You don't want to know what my walk's been like. And I lack wholeness. How am I going to enter into that rest? How do I do that? Your lack of strength and our lack of sight, our lack of walk, our lack of wholeness, none of these things prevented Jesus.

None of these things prevented faith. None of these things prevented wholeness. And none of these things prevented rest. Not one of those. When you enter into the house of mercy, mercy comes unlooked for, comes uncalled for, comes unannounced, but it comes.

And our lack of strength and lack of sight, our messed up walk, our lack of wholeness, they cannot prevent Jesus from coming to us. Psalm 23.

[57 : 10] It says, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. Now, it doesn't mean I won't want anything ever. It also doesn't mean I'll never have a need.

It just means the Lord is my shepherd. All of my wants, man, he takes care of them. As we enter in through the sheep gate into the house of mercy, we have a shepherd who will meet all of our needs. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside, not troubled waters, still waters. What does he restore?

He's a God who restores. He restores my soul. Will you allow Jesus to restore you? Will you allow him to take you from a troubled place to a place of still waters? Will you trust that his green pastures have everything you could ever want?

He restores my soul. And then this part, again, in view of our man here, this guy had no walk. And now he can say, he leads me in the paths of righteousness.

[58 : 14] If Jesus is leading you down a path, it means you're walking it. It means you have a walk. It means you have a direction. It means you have someone to follow. It means you have a purpose. He leads me.

In what path? Righteousness. Don't continue down the path that's gonna whoop, off the cliff you go. 38 years I've been hanging on this branch off the edge of the cliff waiting for someone to save me. 38 years. I don't want to. Listen, I have things in my life that Jesus has taken out of my life. Thank you, Lord. I don't want to find a new one. I want to be in the path of righteousness.

That means he leads. That means it's his word. That means I elevate it to a place in my life that I follow and obey it in faith and obedience. And it means that I trust that God is going to work in a way that is gonna be a reality that overcomes the impossibilities and I don't allow my limited perception to keep out what God wants to do in my life.

Because listen, I may not be running for sin, but if I'm not following him, I'm gonna end up there anyway. I cannot limit him. It is for his name's sake.

[59 : 21] It's not to make me great. It's not to be like, look what I did. You know, come to my house and let me show you my trophy of beds and deliverance that God is. No, mercy simply seeks to bring Jesus and people into close personal contact.

It's to get people to Jesus as quickly as possible. Jesus came to bring wholeness to troubled sheep. Are you a troubled sheep? I bet you are.

Because sheep are a lot alike. They look alike, they act alike, they smell alike, they eat the same things. So if I have troubles, I bet you got troubles. Maybe this morning you're not looking for Jesus. You haven't called on Jesus. But I dare say he's here. He comes unannounced. He comes with mercy.

Father, as we pray, Lord, as we, as troubled sheep, we've come through the sheep gate, we've followed the shepherd, and Lord, now, we have so much infirmity, Lord.

[60 : 27] So much infirmity in our lives, Lord. So much feebleness, so much weakness, Lord. Lord, I think how ironic that the blind people were hoping to see the water troubled.

that the lame people were hoping to get to the troubled water. Lord, isn't that so much like us? We have no capacity or ability to affect anything in our life of lasting change, of eternal change.

We can't perform miracles. We're blind. We have no walk. Lord, if you don't do it in us and for us, we have nothing. Lord, I pray that we would each hear your voice this morning asking us, are you willing?

Do you have the desire? Will you believe? And Lord, I hope like that man, I don't know which comes first, whether your work or our faith, but I hope we respond to your word.

That Lord, we would lean upon you for all of our abilities, all of our needs, all of our infirmities, Lord, that we would see them in a new light, that they would not be the things that weigh us down, they wouldn't be too heavy for us, but Lord, we would pick them up and Lord, we would display them as testimonies of your greatness and your power.

[61 : 46] This morning, Jesus, we say yes to you. Yes, Lord, we would be healed. In Jesus' name, amen.