



Beyond the Miracles of Jesus

During His life, Jesus performed some incredible miracles, some of which we are blessed to be able to read about and study. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, fed the hungry, and even raised the dead. When we study the life of Jesus we quickly learn that He has power over everything!

The simplified vision and mission of Pathway is to live and love like Jesus. It comes from our greatest commands to love God with all that we are and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. His new commandment is to love as He loved. What we as a church have to realize is that while we may not be able to perform miracles the same way Jesus did (maybe we can with faith the size of a mustard seed!) that does not stop us from being able to love the same way that He did.

As we study these miracles we want to look at the obvious lesson in seeing what God has the power to overcome. But we also want to take time to look beyond the miracle itself to see what Jesus communicated while He performed the miracles. His actions in healing, His words, His timing, and His heart all communicate intimate love for the person that was standing in front of Him. Our goal this series is to learn from each miracle to better understand how we can love people everyday like Jesus loved.

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09-06	Beyond the Miracles of Jesus: Jesus Feeds 5,000: Mk 14:13-21, Mk 6:30-44, Lk 9:10-17, Jn 6:1-15
09-13	Beyond the Miracles of Jesus: Jesus Walks on Water: Mt 14:22-33, Mk 6:45-52, Jn 6:16-21
09-20	Beyond the Miracles of Jesus: Jesus Heals Multiple Blind Men: Mk 8:22-26, Jn 9:1-12
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Beyond the Miracles of Jesus:

Jesus Calms the Storm:

Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25

Scripture

Matthew 8:23-27 (NET)

Jesus Calms the Storm

23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

27 The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Mark 4:35-41 (NET)

Jesus Calms the Storm

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Luke 8:22-25 (NET)

Jesus Calms the Storm

22 One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. 23 As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

24 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. 25 "Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples.

In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations:

(Before the Storm) Jesus had continued to be with people, teaching and healing, and the crowds continued to surround Him. He gave His disciples directions to move from the west side of the lake to the less populated east side.

(During the Storm) This is the only place in the gospels where it is reported that Jesus slept. He must have slept like any normal man, but it is included here because of the significance of the timing. The fact that Jesus was able to sleep so deeply means that He was not worried about the loss of life during this storm (as He knew this was not how He was meant to die) and that He may have been exhausted from constantly ministering to the crowds.

The waves were big enough to sweep over the boat and there were heavy winds. These rapid storms were, and continue to be, an occurrence at the Sea of Galilee. “[Violent storms] occur because of geographical conditions. The water is 600 feet below sea level, and the land to the east is considerably higher. As warm air rises from the lake it creates a vacuum that the air on the west rushes in to fill. This brings strong winds on the lake with little warning.” (Constable’s Comm.)

With the magnitude of the storm and the boat taking on water, the disciples felt a need to wake Jesus. “The rudeness of the Mark form, which is no doubt more original, is an eloquent pointer to the messianic veiledness--the Son of God subject to the rudeness of men” (Cranfield, Gospel of Mark) Rebuking the Son of God in this way was inappropriate.

(Jesus Rebukes) Jesus woke up and rebuked the storm as well as His disciples. The disciples’ lack of faith showed in their fear. They saw the storm and lost sight of Jesus’ calm and His plan leading them across the river. They doubted their journey because they took their eyes off of Jesus and fixed them on the trouble in front of them.

When He spoke to the wind and the waves, everything stopped. If the wind died down naturally, the water would have continued to be choppy. It had to be a supernatural occurrence for not only the wind to die down, but for the water to be completely still at once. That is different than any other rapid storm or wind they may have experienced and it shows in their response.

(The Disciples’ Response) “In fear and amazement” the disciples respond. They move from a simple fear (δειλός deilos meaning timid or fearful) to a reverent fear (φοβέω phobeō). They were afraid of the power of the storm, but they were awestruck by the power of Jesus to command nature. They had witnessed many miracles by Jesus, but to command the natural world is something that went beyond any other healing as something only God can do.

• With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the faith, or lack of faith, of the disciples. Do you notice anything different now?

“He said they had ‘little faith’ (Gr. oligopistos). Wherever Matthew used this word in his Gospel, it always reflects a failure to see below the surface of things. Faith in Messiah and fear are mutually exclusive.” (Constable’s Comm.) Jesus already communicated that they were going to cross to the other side of the lake. He expressed the plan, the destination and the mode of transportation. The disciples allowed fear to overtake their faith in the plans of Jesus.

Their knowledge of safety overrode their trust in God's plan, as if God did not know the storm that would hit, or did not understand it the way they did when they saw it face to face.

Jesus was not worried during the storm and He knew they had work to do on the other side. The paths that He leads His followers on may not always be the smoothest or easiest, but His followers can grow in faith by trusting in His plan and seeing how He works through it even when it is different than we expect it to be.

Every experience of trust, witnessing God's plan for their lives, should build a deeper trust and more confidence in the face of storms. Those that have walked with God, especially those that have done so as intimately as the disciples did, should be less susceptible to doubt. It is why Jesus asked, "Do you **still** (οὐπω οὐπό) have no faith?"

• Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)

Even when Jesus rebukes His disciples, He does not ignore them nor does He abandon them. His power saves them from the storm they were facing, even though it was one that Jesus knew did not actually pose a threat to them. After walking with Jesus, hearing His teaching (public and private), and seeing His power through these miracles, you would think that the disciples would have had an unshakable faith by now. Jesus communicated that they should have had more faith. Despite His disappointment, He continued to love.

Our connections and relationships with people in our lives are delicate. We may have long standing friendships, connections with family, or working relationships that have built up over time. And yet we can see these connections crumble instantly with a few actions or words. The work to forgive someone else's shortcomings or doubt of you can be very difficult to overcome. "Is that what they think of me?" "I thought we were closer than that" "Do they really think I would let them get hurt?" Reacting to hurtful words or doubts by someone we are connected to should not stop our ability to love them through our actions, continuing to provide for them. "Love keeps no records of wrongs. . . It always protects, always hopes, always trusts. Love Never fails." (1 Cor 13:4-8)

Additional Scripture (extra scripture to consider if you do want to look deeper into any of these themes):

- God's Displays His Power Over Nature: Psalm 33:6-9, Job 38-39, Exodus 14:21-30
- Trusting God's Plan (even when it's hard): Psalm 23:1-6, Mark 14:32-42
- Loving Others Who May Disappoint or Hurt You: Romans 12:17-21, 1 Peter 3:8-19

- In what ways has your faith grown because you have seen God work in your life?**
- Have you ever hit a moment where you felt that God was directing you somewhere, but it was harder than you expected, and doubt caused you to not follow through?**
- Is there someone in your life that you feel like you are called to love, but continues to hurt you? What can you do to show them love like the love of Jesus?**
- Share and Pray:**

Beyond the Miracles of Jesus:

Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter:

Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:40-56

Scripture

Matthew 9:18-26 (NET)

Restoration and Healing

18 As he was saying these things, a ruler came, bowed low before him, and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live." 19 Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him. [20 *But a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years. . . And the woman was healed from that hour.*] 23 When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the disorderly crowd, 24 he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but asleep." And they began making fun of him. 25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and gently took her by the hand, and the girl got up. 26 And the news of this spread throughout that region.

Mark 5:21-43 (NET)

Restoration and Healing

21 When Jesus had crossed again in a boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him, and he was by the sea. 22 Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came up, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. 23 He asked him urgently, "My little daughter is near death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be healed and live." 24 Jesus went with him, and a large crowd followed and pressed around him.

[25 *Now a woman was there who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years. . .* 34 *He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease."*]

35 While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue ruler's house saying, "Your daughter has died. Why trouble the teacher any longer?" 36 But Jesus, paying no attention to what was said, told the synagogue ruler, "Do not be afraid; just believe." 37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 They came to the house of the synagogue ruler where he saw noisy confusion and people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he entered he said to them, "Why are you distressed and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." 40 And they began making fun of him. But he put them all outside and he took the child's father and mother and his own companions and went into the room where the child was. 41 Then, gently taking the child by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up." 42 The girl got up at once and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). They were completely astonished at this. 43 He strictly ordered that no one should know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Luke 8:40-56 (NET)

Restoration and Healing

40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, because they were all waiting for him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue, came up. Falling at Jesus'

feet, he pleaded with him to come to his house, 42 because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.

[As Jesus was on his way, the crowds pressed around him. 43 Now a woman was there who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years but could not be healed by anyone. . . 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace."]

49 While he was still speaking, someone from the synagogue ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer." 50 But when Jesus heard this, he told him, "Do not be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." 51 Now when he came to the house, Jesus did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother. 52 Now they were all wailing and mourning for her, but he said, "Stop your weeping; she is not dead but asleep." 53 And they began making fun of him, because they knew that she was dead. 54 But Jesus gently took her by the hand and said, "Child, get up." 55 Her spirit returned, and she got up immediately. Then he told them to give her something to eat. 56 Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations (primarily from Mark's account):

(21-24) This story begins like many we have seen in this study. Large crowds around Jesus, people seeking Him out to heal their loved ones, Jesus responding to help the person in front of Him. This time it is a synagogue ruler named Jairus. "Synagogue rulers' were not priests, but lay leaders, who were responsible for the worship services and the synagogue's physical facilities. This honorary title also described distinguished members of the synagogue. As such, Jairus. . . undoubtedly enjoyed much respect in his community." (Constable's Comm.)

(25-34) Included in all synoptic gospels is a parenthetical healing of a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. This is a different miracle that will be discussed next week. It is important to note for this study the way Jesus addresses this woman as "daughter" and that her faith was a catalyst for her healing.

(35-38) The young girl had died. At this point people were ready to dismiss Jesus as a healer was no longer needed. The fact that professional mourners and flute players were ready so quickly showed how sick Jairus's daughter was, and that her death was potentially imminent during her sickness. In response to what was said to Jairus, Jesus extends the challenge, "Do not be afraid; just believe."

(39-43) Jesus addresses the family and the mourners and tells them the child is asleep. There is no need to be distressed. They mocked Him for saying so, which is the opposite mentality of the crowds that followed Jesus for healing (Luke 8:40), Jairus falling at His feet, the woman reaching to touch His cloak. As He reached out to the girl in front of only her parents and His disciples, He gave an intimate call, "Little girl, arise." She was healed instantly. Even though everyone there would know she had died, Jesus still wanted to keep news of this down, most likely because He was still dealing with crowds surrounding Him for miracles for the living, but more would come if they knew He could raise the dead.

• **With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the faith of Jairus in the face of everyone else. Do you notice anything different now?**

Jairus felt the situation with his daughter was urgent enough to seek out Jesus. Similar to the official seeking out Jesus for his son, for a father to leave his child when death is imminent is evidence of desperation. There were more than a few moments during his time with Jesus that he could have begun to doubt. Jesus was delayed in travelling to the house in this urgent matter to connect with a woman, already healed by her faith in touching his cloak. With that delay, he receives news that his daughter is already dead, so he would no longer need Jesus to come. Then as Jesus gives the simple words, "She is not dead but asleep" there would be a moment of hope before those in the house began to laugh.

These are the battles that Jairus overcame in faith. He sought out Jesus and made his request. He waited patiently for Jesus to come, probably feeling the urgency, but wanting to trust this miracle worker. When he was told to let go of hope, he listened to the words of Jesus to believe above the doubt and instead of releasing Jesus, he continued to guide him back to his house. As his community and neighbors mocked a simple statement, he stayed close and was able to hear Jesus give a gentle call to his daughter, only to see her rise immediately.

How many times have we given up on God for any of those reasons? Have we experienced a time when: we were too afraid to ask a bold prayer? It did not happen in our timing or we saw other people receiving blessings when we are waiting for our own? We listened to others and were told that God could not help us anymore? Or the mocking of our culture stopped us from continuing on with Jesus privately?

• **Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)**

In this story, we see that Jesus will not be stopped by anything when He has something that He intends to do. There may be other work that needs to be done, and the timing may not be what we want it to be, but God will always follow through on His plan. The opinion of others will not sway a God who is consistent and trustworthy, and while it may be difficult for those in dire situations (a woman bleeding for 12 years knowing a touch of this healer's cloak could help and a man who is hoping for his daughter to be saved from death) to block out the noise of doubters, Jesus is willing to meet with them intimately.

Even in the noise of a busy crowd or a house full of professional wailers and mourners, Jesus meets those in front of Him intimately. "Daughter, your faith has made you well." "Little girl, arise, get up." These are intimate statements. "It has been suggested that His very words [Talitha kum] were those used by the mother each morning to arouse her daughter from sleep." (Constable's Comm.)

When we have the ability to love the person in front of us, are we willing to take the extra steps to love them. Will we travel through the crowds, hope alongside them, make a promise, and follow through. Do we do the work for this person joyfully to meet their needs intimately? Or do we get swayed by the culture around, or become bitter from the work?



Additional Scripture (extra scripture to consider if you do want to look deeper into any of these themes):

- Trusting in God's Plan and Timing: 2 Peter 3:8-9, Proverbs 16:9, Lamentations 3:25-26
- Not Giving in the Worldly Thoughts/Mocking: Joshua 1:9, Proverbs 29:25, Psalm 56
- Sacrificially Loving Others: Philippians 2:3, John 15:13, Romans 12:9-21

- **Have you ever hit any moments like Jairus did where doubt could creep in? How did you respond to the waiting, the unknown timing, or the mocking from others?**
- **Is there someone in your life that you have made promises to help, but following through on that promise is/has taken you on a long journey that you thought it would be? Have you been able to continue to love them and meet with them intimately?**
- **Who is God calling you to love like Jesus loved and how can you meet their needs this week?**
- **Share and Pray:**



Beyond the Miracles of Jesus:

Woman in the Crowd:

Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:25-34, Luke 8:42-48

Scripture:

Matthew 9:20-22

20 But a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 For she kept saying to herself, "If only I touch his cloak, I will be healed." 22 But when Jesus turned and saw her he said, "Have courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed from that hour.

Mark 5:25-34

25 Now a woman was there who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years. 26 She had endured a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet instead of getting better, she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 for she kept saying, "If only I touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29 At once the bleeding stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 Jesus knew at once that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 His disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing against you and you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 But he looked around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, with fear and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Luke 8:42-48

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds pressed around him. 43 Now a woman was there who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years but could not be healed by anyone. 44 She came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak, and at once the bleeding stopped. 45 Then Jesus asked, "Who was it who touched me?" When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are surrounding you and pressing against you!" 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I know that power has gone out from me." 47 When the woman saw that she could not escape notice, she came trembling and fell down before him. In the presence of all the people, she explained why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations:

Jesus began his journey to help Jairus's daughter. Before He arrives at her house, we find this parenthetical story of a woman in the crowd following Jesus.

(Mark 5:25-26) The unnamed woman in this story has been suffering from 12 years of "hemorrhaging," possibly a uterine disease (Expositor's Comm). She had spent everything,

seen many doctors, and at this point was incurable. After each attempt for a cure, her condition worsened.

(27-29) Having exhausted every resource she had, the desperation of her situation moved her to grasp at Jesus from behind. There was a common superstition that a person's power was transmitted into their clothing. That, mixed with a faith in the healing power of Jesus, led to an immediate healing that no other medical source could provide.

(30-32) Jesus felt the power move through Him. While He was fully God, He also became fully man. The power of healing was from God, and while Jesus did not actively call on God's power to heal this woman, He was aware that God's power moved through Him. The disciples of Jesus did not know that anything had happened, and after travelling in so many crowds wondered why Jesus was looking for someone that touched Him.

(33-34) The woman knew that she could not escape, so she fell before Jesus and confessed everything. Jesus could have walked away, with her healed, but instead He greeted her intimately as "daughter" and made sure that she knew her healing was by faith in God's power, not superstition.

• With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the faith of the woman in the crowd. Do you notice anything different now?

Think about what twelve years of an ailment is like. This is not a simple cold, or virus. This hemorrhaging, chronic bleeding, would have defined this woman as "perpetually unclean" (Lev 15:25-33) and contact with her would be prohibited. It makes sense that she would approach Jesus from behind, and then hide at first as He looked to see who had received His power. She was not only an unclean woman, but she was in a busy crowd (risking the ceremonial cleanliness of others around her by contact) and she touched the "edge of His cloak."

The edge, the tassel (in Greek κράσπεδον *kraspedon* that relates to תַּיִטַּיִת *ṭayṭit* in Hebrew from Num 15:37-41) of a Jewish garment, was a symbol of a Jewish man's obedience to the law (NET Bible Study). She had spent all of her money, visited all the doctors she could, and her illness only got worse. Twelve years had cost her everything in both material and social worth.

"The regulation of such a woman's life was considered so important that the Mishnah devotes an entire tractate to the subject (*Zabim*) and gives some of the "remedies" for staunching the flow. Having heard of others who had been healed at Jesus' touch, this woman decided to touch even a tassel of Jesus' cloak (v.21). Moved in part by a superstitious view of Jesus, she struggled through the crowd, which, because of her "unclean" condition, she should have avoided." (Expositors Comm.) Jesus could have very well been another possible cure from the list of healers that she saw, but the large number of people surrounding and the stories that came with Jesus, drove her to move into the crowds.

In the Greek she thought, "If I could touch his *kraspedon*, I will be saved (σώζω *sōzō*)." "The author uses a term for being healed (Grk "saved") that would have spiritual significance to



his readers. It may be a double entendre, since elsewhere he uses verbs that simply mean "heal": If only the reader would "touch" Jesus, he too would be 'saved.'" (NET Bible Study)

In response, she not only found healing, but an intimate interaction with Jesus, who addressed her as "daughter" and told her that her faith in Him had made her well (again the same word for "saved").

• Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)

Jesus was on a very important trip to save the daughter of Jairus from death. His delay in going to her had allowed too much time to pass to save her. We know that Jesus does make it to the house to bring her back to life, but we can only imagine what Jairus felt in this moment.

Yet in the midst of this urgent trip, Jesus stopped to meet intimately with someone who had 12 years of isolation. She came to Jesus from behind, was healed, and without a word, everyone could have moved on. Instead, Jesus stopped and looked into the crowd to find the person that needed His healing power. She approached trembling, and instead of finding rebuke for breaking laws of cleanliness, she found compassion.

This is the only place in the gospels that Jesus used the term "daughter" to directly address someone. That connection must have meant a lot to her after her 12 years of isolating. All of these thoughts must have also given Jairus hope. Jesus tells Him to just believe in Him to heal his 12 year old daughter right after he says, "daughter" your faith has healed you after 12 years.

There are urgencies in our own lives and we can take away two important lessons. First, we cannot allow work, as important as it may be, to make us blind to God given opportunities to meet someone right in front of us in a personal way. The chance to connect with a coworker is more important than our work, our children are more important than chores, a stranger we walk past than getting to our destination. Each opportunity to connect is a God given appointment. Secondly, we have to trust Jesus and His timing when we are waiting for Him to rescue. He may not move at the speed we want Him to, but like Jairus if we can see the work He is doing around us then maybe we can "just believe" as well.

Additional Scripture (extra scripture to consider if you do want to look deeper into any of these themes):

- Trusting God's timing: Isaiah 55:8-9, Psalm 31:14-16, 23-24
- Loving people that we come in contact with: 1 John 4:13-21, Luke 10:25-37
- The importance of faith and believing: Ephesians 2:8-9, John 20:29, Romans 10:14-17

• Do you or have you had any "12 year" struggles? What are they and how have you dealt with those longer lasting problems? If you have made it through, how did God help you through it? How can you "just believe" or "have faith" in these situations?



- **What are some of the things that keep you busy that might prevent you from connecting with people around you intimately? Who is God calling you to pause and connect with? Why is it so hard to stop what you are doing to meet with them?**
- **In what aspects of your life do you need to trust God with? Waiting for Jesus's plan like Jairus? Or reaching in desperation for just a touch of Jesus?**
- **Share and Pray:**



Beyond the Miracles of Jesus: Invalid at Bethesda: John 5:1-15

Scripture

John 5:1-15 (NET)

Healing a Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda

1 After this there was a Jewish feast, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool called Bethzatha in Aramaic, which has five covered walkways. 3 A great number of sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed people were lying in these walkways. 5 Now a man was there who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and when he realized that the man had been disabled a long time already, he said to him, "Do you want to become well?" 7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am trying to get into the water, someone else goes down there before me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Stand up! Pick up your mat and walk." 9 Immediately the man was healed, and he picked up his mat and started walking. (Now that day was a Sabbath.)

10 So the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and you are not permitted to carry your mat." 11 But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" 12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your mat and walk'?" 13 But the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped out, since there was a crowd in that place.

14 After this Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "Look, you have become well. Don't sin any more, lest anything worse happen to you." 15 The man went away and informed the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the one who had made him well.

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations:

(1-3) You may read different translations that use Bethesda, Bethzatha or Bethsaida (or even Belzetha). "Bethesda seems to be an accurate Greek rendition of the name. . . Bethzatha is a rendition of the Aramaic intensive plural [Bet ∞ Esdata]. . . The fact that there are multiple readings here suggests that the original was not well understood." (NET Bible Notes). The modern name is St. Anne's pool and there were "two pools with a covered colonnade or portico on all four sides of the complex, and a fifth colonnade that separated the two pools." (Constable's Comm.) People gathered at the pool, hoping to be healed of whatever their issues were.

(4) Depending on which translation you use when you read the Bible, you will notice that verse 4 is either missing (NIV, ESV, NLT, NET), put into brackets (NASB), or present with no modifications (KJV). This verse contains information that an angel would stir up the waters and that the first one into the pool would be healed. Very few textual scholars accept the authenticity of this verse. They are not found in the earliest manuscripts and include vocabulary and syntax that are very different from the rest of John's gospel. The documents that do have the verse

vary greatly themselves, showing a less connected or consistent testimony. Knowing the content of the verse helps to understand what the superstition of the pool might have been, or at least what some interpreters thought the cause of the moving water might be. But the text evidence itself is too inconsistent to be included in modern Bible translations.

(5-7) Thirty-eight years is an extremely long time to be confined to a bed. He would be too weak to stand or walk for any extended time or any speed. Jesus saw this man and appealed to man's will to be cured. "The invalid's reply shows that he had lost his independent determination. He was waiting for somebody to assist him." (Expositor's Comm.)

(8-9) Jesus heals the man, even though he did not request to be healed, nor did he express any faith. Jesus's will to heal the man gave the man the power to rise and carry his mat away.

(10-13) As we have been studying the miracles of Jesus, we have encountered a few arguments between Jewish leaders and Jesus over the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-3:6). "The rabbinic application of the fourth commandment involved all kinds of casuistic interpretation, much of which was overdrawn." (Expositor's Comm.) This is another miracle where Jesus found the need of people as priority, much like the analogy of a sheep falling into a ditch on the Sabbath day (Matthew 12:10-12).

(14-15) Jesus searched to find the man as He was not done with the interaction. The purpose of Jesus was not just to meet physical needs, but also spiritual. Jesus' command to "stop sinning" implies that part of his long lasting ailment was due to his own sin.

• With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the faith of the paralytic. Do you notice anything different now?

Before Jesus healed the man, He asked a very important question. Do you want to be healed?" He's been disabled for 38 years, and currently laying next to a pool known for healing people. Many times people stuck in a long issue lose hope and the desire to change. Being stuck in sin, anger, hurt, a physical ailment, even though not ideal becomes comfortable. The work of reopening those wounds or the disappointment of not being healed make it easier to not try.

After deflecting the responsibility for why he had not been healed yet, "I have no one to help me. . . someone else goes down before me," the man also passes responsibility for disobeying the sabbath rules as well. Nothing was his fault.

Jesus, however, feels it necessary to find the man to not only follow up about the healing, but also challenge him to spiritual change. There was a sin that this man needed to let go of that was hindering him from growing. This man was not healed because of his own faith, but because of the will of Jesus to connect with him. "Many people accept God's gifts but ignore the Giver. Some experience miracles but do not go to heaven." (Constable's Comm.)

• Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)



Notice that Jesus met the needs of the paralytic before the call to stop sinning. Holiness was not a qualification for healing or finding compassion. Jesus healed many without knowing their stories, because He understood their needs. He touched the leper, and healed a woman in a crowd. He also healed this man by the pool.

The feeling that many people have is that they need to be put together to walk into a church. Many times we here people say, "When I get myself put back together, I will come back to church." Jesus sought out the broken to let them know that even in their brokenness that they mattered. He met their needs. Then He used that love and compassion as a gateway to talk about more eternal things.

Additional Scripture (extra scripture to consider if you do want to look deeper into any of these themes):

- God's Provision: Luke 12:24-31, Lam 3:22-24, Psalm 23
- Call to Compassion: Matthew 25:31-46, Isaiah 58:7, Luke 3:11
- Call to Sanctification: 2 Thes 2:13-17, Col 3:1-11

- How often do we take the gifts of God, the provisions in our own lives, and ignore God and what He is doing? Are we ever more comfortable sitting in our ailments. It takes work to change. It would have taken determination for this man to find healing. Humility to ask for help down to the waters. Instead, he chose to stay on his mat and blame others for his lack of improvement, and then not give thanks to Jesus once he was healed.

- As a church, how can we change the idea that you have to be put together to come to worship God with us? Can we see someone, even in their brokenness, and see that they are worthy to be helped even before they change? Then, after we meet their needs, would we take the opportunity to move on to meet their spiritual needs?

- **Share and Pray:**