

The Book of John - 29

Introduction - In John chapter 5, we are confronted with the third sign of seven in the book of John. All that the Savior does is with purpose. The Lord, in this sign, **displays His authority**. Following the sign of the healing of the impotent man, the Bible records an adversarial conversation for us.

The book of John shows in these early chapters **The Coming Rejection of the Word**. Let us read together, beginning in **verses 9-17**.

These signs are a few examples of what the Lord did in His earthly time, as recorded in the gospel records.

The Bible tells us in **John 21:25**, *“25 And there **are also many other things which Jesus did**, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”*

That verse is curious to me because it gives us the idea that John is musing on the wonders of the Lord.

As we look back at this passage, we are reminded of how the Lord entered this area—the pool of Bethesda—the house of mercy. The Word of God tells us there was a great multitude of folks who had all manners of infirmities. These multitudes were all waiting on a miraculous cure. The Lord approaches a specific case, a man who had **an infirmity for 38 years**. He knew this man; the Bible tells us. And He spoke to Him first with a **question** and then secondly with a **directive**.

As we saw, the question was, *“Wilt thou be made whole?”* It is the question for all humanity.

The man, in his response, begins to enumerate His problem. And so, as if to dismiss the man’s faulty assumption, **the Lord challenges Him**. Notice with me the conversation as a whole beginning in **verse 6**.

John 5:6–9 *“6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.”*

The man’s expression tells us He **desired to be made whole** but lacked the **opportunity**. And so, the Lord challenges Him with a direct command.

John 5:8 tells us, *“8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”*

There are **three impossibilities** in this command. The first was the word ‘**Rise**.’ This

command was directed to this man's will and demanded faith in the one who spoke. Many sit around, often licking their wounds, and waste vast amounts of time doing so. That often-quoted proverb applies to you and me.

Proverbs 24:16 *"16 For a just man falleth seven times, **and riseth up again**: But the wicked shall fall into mischief."*

The strength to rise again is given by the Lord, just as in this situation with the impotent man. And so, this first impossible challenge was to **rise up**. Perhaps that was enough, but then the Lord tells Him further, "...**take up thy bed**..." It would be one thing for the man to get up but another to carry something else.

And then we have the third impossibility. He says, Rise (1), take up thy bed (2) **and walk (3)**.

The word used here means **not just to walk but to walk about**. Strong's concordance states that the word translated as 'walk'(περιπατέω peripateō) means "...*tread all around, walk at large (especially as proof of ability)*." You see, the Lord Jesus Christ was working in this man's life and showing the world **He has authority over all things**.

He has authority over **sickness**.

He has authority over the **Sabbath**.

Notice the next verse. **John 5:9** *"9 And **immediately the man was made whole**, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath."*

This word '*immediately*' not only speaks to the **immediate healing power of God**, but also **the act of faith by the man**. We see that the man was immediately made whole. Did He obey the Lord's command? Why yes, he did, for the Bible tells us that He rose up, took up his bed, and walked. As is typical in these accounts, the opposition to the Lord is immediately seen. The Bible gives us the purposeful information that these things were done on **the Sabbath day**. The Jews, it seems, **immediately challenge this man**.

Verse 10 tells us, *"10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, **It is the sabbath day**: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed."*

It is interesting and sad, at the same time, that these folks who were to be concerned with the people completely disregard the fact that He was healed. You see, "the Rabbis had hedged the sabbath around with dozens of rules and regulations." I am told there were 39 categories of regulations with a resounding total of 1521 individual regulations related to the Sabbath.

One Rabbi by the name of Simeon Ben Lakish, after 3 1/2 years of study, characterized all of these 'regulations' **as a mountain suspended by a hair**. And so, you can see the **layer upon layer of mountainous burden** added to what God intended to be a day of rest and satisfaction for man.

“What God had ordained to be a blessing they converted into a burden. Ruler number thirty-nine forbade the carrying of a load from one dwelling to another. According to them, the man should either have stayed where he was until the sabbath was over (as though the man was not heartily sick of the place) or else should have left his bed there, taking a chance on its being stolen (which would be unthinkable for such a poor man).” - John Phillips

The discussion between this man and the authorities ensues. They tell him you have broken the law. Notice this **man’s understanding of authority**.

Verse 11 tells us, *“11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.”*

The healed man states that the authority that healed me is the same authority that commanded me to take up my bed and walk. In other words, we could say this way: the authority of the one who healed me is **superior to yours!**

All around this country, the enemies of the cross are standing up and declaring you do not have the authority to say this is right and this is wrong. You do not have the authority to speak about the name of Jesus Christ and tell others He is the Savior. You do not have the authority to say to people that God commandeth every man everywhere to repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Our lesson coming up in HRSOTB is on the authority of the local New Testament Church. Where does this local church derive its authority?

This man had it right; he states, *“He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.”*

As we close this lesson, the question for you and me this morning is simply this— By what authority do you live your life?