

Pick Up Your Mat and Walk

(John 5:1-15)

Yearly Theme: *“Kindness is... Astounding”*

Series Title: *“Kindness 24/7”*

October 8th, 2023

Something to think about:

Persistence usually pays off.

We come to a miracle of Jesus today in the city of Jerusalem during one of the annual Jewish festivals. Jesus was in town celebrating the festival when he encountered a man who had been ill for some 38 years and unable get around. Sitting on his mat near the pool of Bethesda near the Temple courts, he encounters Jesus and will forever be changed by the chance meeting. Let’s take a look:

John 5:1-15 (NLT),

Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. ² Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. ³ Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. ⁵ One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

⁷ “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

⁸ Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

⁹ Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, ¹⁰ so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!”

¹¹ But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

¹² “Who said such a thing as that?” they demanded.

¹³ The man didn’t know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. ¹⁴ But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵ Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹

When you give up hope you give up all possibility of change. Persistence through tough circumstances is the means by which we grow, learn, and become stronger. Giving up is giving in to fear, defeat, and loss and benefits us nothing at all. Even when all others

may have walked away from us, Jesus is willing to walk with us through anything if we let Him.

Key Point: *“True agents of kindness press in when all others walk away.”*

Let’s follow the progress of this particular miracle experience...

- **Would you like to get well?**

John 5:1-6 (NLT), Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. ² Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. ³ Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. ⁵ One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

- **Someone else always gets there ahead of me.**

John 5:7 (NLT), “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

- **Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!**

John 5:8 (NLT), ⁸ Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

⁹ Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, ¹⁰ so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!”

Something to take home:

Have you been sitting by a pool of promise awaiting a miracle for so long that you don’t think things will ever change? Are you merely going through the motions because that’s all you know to do at this point? Has brokenness and sorrow become your companions through the dark valley in which you’ve found yourself? Though GOD may seem distant, though He may seem too far to hear your cries for help, He’s truly just a breath away asking if you want to be well, and willing to answer Him with a resounding yes. And though your miracle may not be what you expect, He calls you to pick up your mat (whatever that is) and walk!

Key Point: *“True agents of kindness press in when all others walk away.”*

¹ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015),