



**Sunday, April 26, 2009: The Sign of Grace**

**Scripture: John 5:1-17**

**Sermon Notes:**

1. The healing at the pool of Bethesda is a miracle where no evident faith is manifest in the recipient, and no request is made of Jesus for healing -- it is purely a sovereign act of kindness and power.
2. As the infirm man had only his need to recommend him to Jesus, so also Christ shows His love and grace to us simply on account of our need (Romans 5:8).
3. When Jesus asks him if he wants to be healed, the man seems offended and does not give a straight answer.
4. The man may have grown accustomed to his life of infirmity and not wanted the healing on account of the work and responsibility that would accompany it.
5. We live in a culture of victimization that says that every person who suffers a hardship in life is a victim, and not responsible for his circumstances.
6. Upon seeing the man after Jesus healed him, the Jewish authorities were interested only in what they perceived to be a violation of Sabbath law.
7. The Pharisees wanted God only on their terms, so when Jesus did not conform to their oral traditions or interpretation of the Law, they refused to think that they might be wrong.
8. The Jewish authorities had entirely lost the true purpose and meaning of the day. The New Testament reveals the Sabbath to be a festival day fulfilled in the rest we have in Jesus Christ.
9. In verse 11, the man is quick to point out that he was only carrying his mat because he was told to do so -- he was not to blame.
10. John 5:14. Jesus meets the man in the temple and warns him to "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." This possibly indicates that the man's infirmity had been brought about by a specific sin in his past.
11. The man responds to Jesus' admonition by reporting Him to the Jewish authorities.
12. This miracle is one of only a few instances in the gospels where ingratitude and even hostility are finally produced in the recipient of the miracle.

**Application Questions:**

1. What is a biblical response to our culture of victimization, of "rights and no responsibilities"?
2. Apart from John 5 and Romans 5:8, what other Scripture passages are there which demonstrate how Christ provided for our need for healing and salvation even though we were undeserving sinners?
3. Do we respond to the gospel of Christ and its challenge to "sin no more" in the same way as the infirm man responded to his Healer -- with irritation and by laying charges against Christ, rather than coming in gratitude for His healing and salvation?
4. Reflecting on the infirm man's response to Jesus' question about healing, H. R. Reynolds writes, "There are many who are not anxious for salvation, with all the demands it makes upon the life, with its summons to self-sacrifice and the repression of self-indulgence." Are we "religious impostors" who shirk the responsibility, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice that we are called to as Christians?
5. How can we reach out with the Gospel to those people who do not want the responsibility that comes with salvation and being a follower of Christ?