

october 16, 2020

Hi KC Parents!

I recently joined a group devotional with some friends, called "Healed by Jesus", on YouVersion. One day we focused on the story of Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda in John 5:10-13. What came to the forefront of my mind, wasn't so much the healing itself. What blatantly stood out was the legalistic religion that the Pharisees practiced, and their response to the healing.

Jesus notices a pathetic man, who was lame and had been so for 38 years! He approaches the man and asks him if he wants to be well. Of course, this is a strange question to ask someone who's sitting by a pool, known for its healing waters. The man tells Jesus that he indeed does want to be healed, but he has no one to help him into the water when it's stirred.

At this point Jesus tells him, "Get up! Grab your mat and go". Instantly, the man was healed. He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!" But this miracle happened on the Sabbath.

What a day! What a moment. The man experiences something wonderful in his body, pops up to his feet, grabs his mat (as Jesus instructed), and takes off WALKING! Jesus also takes off and hides in the crowd because he knows what he just did is going to cause a ruckus.

And then, this is of course where the legalistic religion dampens the scene...the part that pierces my heart... Jesus does this amazing miracle and the minute the Pharisees see the happy man carrying his mat, they are angry and jealous.

They approach the healed man and instead of congratulating and rejoicing with him, they rebuke him for carrying his mat. They rebuked Jesus for breaking the Sabbath. Jesus was obliterating their version of how the world was supposed to operate and they would not tolerate it.

This wasn't the only time Jesus strayed from the Sabbath regulations. When Jesus healed people, he sometimes did it on the "wrong" day. He could have followed the religious legalism that he was engrossed in. He could have chosen not to heal on the Sabbath to keep the Pharisees happy and avoid conflict. But it seems his best healings were saved for times like these, and I love it.

He's making a statement and there's always a depth to his stories if we take time to notice. Jesus broke the rules or "God boxes" that the Pharisees had, which infuriated them. As we read the story now, we think, how could they have responded that way? How legalistic and absurd! Yet we are all, at times like Pharisees too, missing the point and wanting God to conform to our rules and boxes.

But God is powerful, and his love knows no bounds. Wouldn't this miracle send someone a message loud and clear, that God's love and compassion obliterate man-made rules and regulations?

Thank you, Jesus, that healing in your name is possible every moment of every day, with no limits or boundaries.



I have a sister and a sister-in-law who are both battling cancer, and I so want Jesus to physically heal them. I also want him to free me from any smack of Phariseeism and spiritual sin in my heart. I don't want to be the person who dampens the celebrations in heaven and earth when God shows up in unexpected ways, breaking down barriers, and religious traditions as he explodes on the scene in power and glory!

What attitudes, notions, judgments, or criticisms hinder us from seeing and celebrating the magnificence of God?

Every day there are miracles all around us—even in our homes. Lord help us welcome your Holy Spirit and the quirky ways you move in and through our lives. Let us recognize when holiness is on the scene so we can make way for you to heal, deliver, and free us. I pray for those who are sick among us and ask you to speak your healing words that get us back on our feet, carrying our mats!

Blessings,
Viv Stone