

HOPE FOR A NEEDY WORLD

John 5:6-8

John chapter five described the healing of an impotent man and subsequent controversial discussion that Christ had with the Jews about the timing of the healing and His divinity. In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate (Nehemiah 3:1), there was a public swimming pool accessed directly by five covered doorways. In these doorways lay many sick people waiting for the bubbling of the water. Some of them were blind, some crippled and others paralyzed. They lost sensations and functions of various parts of their bodies. The swimming pool when it bubbles exhibits supernatural ability to heal any disease especially the disease of whoever was the first to step into the water after it was stirred up. The stirring was intermittent and believed to be done by an angel of the Lord. The pool was named “*Bethesda*”, which means “*House of mercy*”.

Among the sick that lay by Bethesda pool was a certain man whom Jesus came to visit and cure. His paralytic condition had lingered for thirty eight years. Jesus knew this. On getting to him, Jesus asked him whether he was willing to get well. The man, not knowing who Jesus was explained the difficulty he had and the trouble he was in. He complained that he had no one willing to assist him to get into the pool. Whenever it bubbles, before he could get into the water, someone else steps in ahead of him. Jesus commanded authoritatively that he should get up, pick up his bed or sleeping pad and walk. Instantly, God’s power fell on the man, he regained strength, picked up his bed and walked away. This healing took place on a Sabbath day. There are many lessons to learn from this encounter. To properly understand these lessons shall consider three subtopics:

1. Hurting world’s need for Bethesda
2. God appointed humanity’s Bethesda
3. Receiving mercy from the merciful Lord

1. Hurting world’s need for Bethesda

John 5:1-3, Mathew 5:5, Luke 6:36, Mathew 9:35-36, 8:16, Luke 13:10-16

The name Bethesda given to this public swimming pool is very significant. Its meaning “*House of mercy*” is significant. First, the miracles granted here by God at no cost will be a great relieve to those who had incurable diseases as well as those who cannot afford the cost of treatment. It should inspire God’s people who are custodians of God’s interest on earth and members of His family to set up such a house or place on earth. There are people in the world who for different reasons are unable to access medical treatment or had ailments that had no cure. It should be possible to have an “*angel*” (messenger from God; a believer or minister) by God’s grace and with the resources He provides equip, set up or empower a Bethesda in the world to provide relieve for the suffering and hurting at little or no cost and help them recover fully like this paralytic or maximize the use of their physical and intellectual abilities to the glory of God.

It should be possible by God's help for God's people to provide a place where people may drink water, eat food, get a change of clothing, enjoy a night's sleep or even be schooled to cure them of the disease of ignorance and inability to read the scriptures at little or no cost in the name of the Lord and for His glory. The church should be a "*Bethesda*" in the world where men can find and experience God's compassion in form of healing for the sick, deliverance for the captives and oppressed and wholesome restoration of virtues and values. The church should reflect God's nature of love and mercy through providing help to helpless and hope or encouragement to the hopeless.

2. God appointed humanity's Bethesda

John 5:4-6, Zechariah 13:1, Acts 10:38, John 16:23-24, John 4:14, Luke 4:18

Jesus is humanity's true "*Bethesda*" Zechariah 13:1. Through His name healing is granted at no cost, on many occasions, healing of ailments thought to be incurable. He has granted the use of His name in prayers to solve any and all problems John 16: 23-24. He is the fountain opened to the house of David for cleansing from sin and uncleanness, and removal of their consequences such as sicknesses, curse and death. The name of Jesus is God's provision to accomplish what that bubbling pool did at that time. The name of Jesus used in prayer can cure any sickness. John 4:14 speaks of another bubbling pool, that of the Holy Spirit, the rivers of living waters within the saved and sanctified believer. It is a kind of bubbling that propels men in the direction of everlasting life.

The interaction between the impotent man and Jesus was also interesting and contains several lessons. Jesus knew that the man was helpless and hopeless. As He later pointed out, He knew that the man was a sinner. Even after the healing, it was clear that the man did not know Jesus until Jesus met him later in the Temple. The greatness of the Lord's mercy therefore shined forth through the man's healing; indeed, the man found mercy in the house of mercy from the most merciful.

3. Receiving mercy from the merciful Lord

John 5:6, Mathew 11:28-30, Mathew 7:7, Mark 10:46-52, Mathew 15:21-28

The mercy of the Lord is still flowing like a river to many today who desires His help and come to Him Mathew 11:28-30. The Lord's question on whether the man was willing to get well was meant to stir up a desire in him to pray. No matter how terrible our situation is, no matter how long our problem has been with us, it may even have come as consequence of our flaws, faults or sins. Provided we can still pray and we do, we are on our way to deliverance. The Lord expects those who are hurting in any way and for any reason to communicate to Him the same in prayer as evidence of their faith in Him. He expects them to pray and communicate their desire to be free.