

## What is your choice?

By Pastor Marvin R. Barham

**John 5: 1-11** *1After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6When 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?** 7The 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.** 8Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, **It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.** 11He answered them, **He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.***

Just the casual reading of this story stirs my spirit and excites me within. It burns a desire within me for an increase faith in the Word of God and obedience in my own life.

We find here a pool that an angel of the Lord would come and stir the waters. Oh that the Word of God would stir the waters within us; that every time we hear the Word of God that the Spirit of the Word would stir a thirst in our spirits to dive into the waters of His presence. Here the sick, hurting, blind, crippled, diseased would all gather and wait for the stirring to be the first to reap the deliverance only to go on their way and live as they desire. Sounds like many people I see in the church. They are going here and there, waiting and watching for a stirring of the Spirit only for selfish gain to go on their way and do nothing more with it until they are in need again.

But here we find a man who had an infirmity where he could not even move to help himself. He had been in this condition for thirty-eight years. For starters how many of us would have been so persistent to the purposes and promises of God without seeing fruit of their manifestation for thirty-eight years? Second, look at this guy's response, "Everyone else gets healed but not me. I have no man to help me or I could be healed. Finally, do you think that have thirty-eight years of this the guy really did not want healed. Do you think that just maybe he had come to believe that after thirty-eight years God did not want him made whole? Look at what Jesus asked him, "Do you really want to be made whole?" Is it possible that this man had come to find some sense of existence, security, and comfort in not being whole? Rather than be made whole and experiencing the transforming power of God in our lives, is it possible we grow fond of our sin and dysfunction and refuse to let it go?

C.S. Lewis states, "It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because she cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

God wants to help you see yourself as you are and what He desires to change and grow. But it is also easy to get fixated on what needs changed that we grow comfortable in it and do not change. We must be able to not only see where we fall short but be able to see and invasion what God sees in us made whole. Okay, so you see areas that God is working on or needs to work on. But can you also see yourself walking in a deeper relationship, growing in more maturity, walking in a greater purpose, embracing greater responsibility, responding differently to challenges, and fulfilling a greater destiny?

God wants to make you Spiritually well. God wants to make you more than you were, more than you are, and more than you can even dream right now. But you must decide what you want? Do you want His touch? Do you really want the challenges, discomfort, sacrifices, and responsibility that come with purpose and destiny in the Kingdom of God? Do you want what it takes to be made whole? Do you really want to be made whole inside and out? Do you really want to be made whole in your predestined purpose of God? God requires you to leave some old and familiar ways and embrace a new way of living in Christ. It breaks the heart of Father to know that some will not yield their will to His and accept change that could make them whole. Instead, they would rather stay next to the pool where the Spirit once dwelled, watch others be made whole yet find comfort in their familiarity of excuses.

Note that once this man had resolved he truly wanted to be made whole by the Master not a traditional movement or what had become a familiar experience, the legalist came. However, he refused to let go of the Master's touch. He states, "He (the authority) which made me whole, the same (that same authority) told me to take my bed and walk (is the same authority, Word, of the Sabbath commandment).

What is your choice? What authority reigns in your life? Have you gotten comfortable with an unhealthy condition be a habit, sin, emotion, or whatever it may be? What would God require of you to be made whole? Are willing to be honest with your will and let His will pour down on you? Do you really want to be made whole?