

Lord of Restoration

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. ³ In these lay a multitude of invalids- blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁴ ⁵ One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" ⁷ The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." ⁸ Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." ⁹ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." ¹¹ But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" ¹² They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. ¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." ¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:1-18)

What is the sign?

What do we learn about Jesus from this sign?

What do we learn about ourselves from this sign?

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. Whose words are weighty to you? Who do you go to for advice or counsel? Share a particularly piece of good/wise/true counsel you've received from this person in the past year.

For Further Thought and Discussion:

3. Why were the multitudes gathered at the pool at Bethesda (vv. 2, 7)? Why do you think Jesus singles out the paralytic man (vv. 5-7)? Why does he perform this action on the Sabbath (vv. 9, 18)?
4. What do Jesus' statements (vv. 6, 8, 14, 18) reveal about his identity (see Genesis 1:1ff; John 1:1-3; 5:19-25). What powers and prerogatives does Jesus claim for himself?
5. What do Jesus' statements reveal about us (see especially vv. 6, 14)? What does Jesus say about our condition? What kind of healing do we need most?

Application:

6. Calvin says that the man in this story, "*limits the assistance of God according to his own thought.*" How does he do this? How do we? Can you think of ways you've limited God by placing certain expectations on him (e.g. "God, I won't be okay/happy until you do this particular thing for me in this particular way")? How might you be doing that currently?
7. The Pharisees were zealous to obey the Bible (see vv. 9-18; Exodus 20:8-11). Yet, their zeal to obey Scripture caused them to *reject* Jesus' words (John 5:39-47). How do you think this happened? Are there unhelpful ways to read the Bible (e.g. ways that lead us away from Jesus)? How can we avoid reading the Bible *primarily* as a book about morality, religion, ritual, etc. (rather than about Jesus)?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?