

# Bible Studies for Life: March 16

*The Sign of His Authority • John 5:1-11, 17-20*

*By Clay Anthony*



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Jesus has such an encounter in John 5. An invalid has laid helpless for thirty-eight years hoping that someone will come to his aid. His aid was wrapped up in the false promise that involved being dipped into a pool of water that supposedly had powers sent from heaven. Before we are too harsh towards this man, remember all the people that approached Jesus were in such trouble. Jesus had restored eyesight, healed blood issues and even raised the dead – all of whom had reached the ends of their proverbial ropes in searching for help. We are not told if the man was born lame or was injured in an accident. All we know is that for almost four decades he had agonized with the desire for help.

We need to recognize that Jesus approached the man first. In other moments, blind people, demon possessed people, and other sick people had sought Jesus out first. Here we see our Savior fully engaged in His seek-and-find mission. It is telling that Jesus seems to ask the most absurd question in verse 6: “Do you want to be healed?” What is the man supposed to say, “Nah, I am good.” Of course he desires to be healed. He is lame and has missed out on so much of his life. There should be no doubt that he wants to be made whole. Perhaps Jesus has a plan to lay him in the water once it is stirred. Then the man could

return to his normal life and family. He just needed to wait until the water stirred to experience its power.

It is at this moment that Jesus displays an authority as this man could not have imagined. The water was indeed powerless to help, but Jesus needed but just a phrase to speak in verse 8: "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." We can be certain that the man's ears heard these words, but chances are he misunderstood. Never has anyone had this type of authority to speak and bones, ligaments, blood vessels and nerve endings all stood at attention. This Jesus indeed has authority over the human body, but it did not stop there.

Think of the times that Jesus showed authority over nature itself: He could walk on water, multiply food for the masses and calm storms. He never needed a prompt or a ritual to perform. In all these miraculous events, Jesus just spoke. It should never be lost on us that Jesus' authority is always displayed by His spoken word. The Creation story, the Burning Bush, the Raising of Lazarus and all other such stories occur at the sound of His voice.

Here is a lame man simply desiring help into a pool in the hopes that his lameness will disappear. What he received was so much more. This man was a firsthand witness to the authority of Jesus and only Jesus could heal. If we refer back to Numbers 5 we see direction given for ill people to take certain steps and show themselves to the priests to be labeled clean. This practice was in effect in Jesus' day. This step was skipped altogether when Jesus just spoke a word of healing to the man. Verse 16 tells us that the Pharisees were infuriated that this healing occurred on the Sabbath. Truth of the matter was the priests could declare one clean but were powerless to heal. They had no such authority.

He with all power and authority can do as He pleases and it pleased Jesus to heal one that was hurting. For that, we all must be grateful. Why? Because of the continued conversation

that Jesus has with the healed man at verse 14. There is indeed a fate worse than being trapped in a broken body. "Do not sin, so that nothing worse will happen to you," the man is warned. What could possibly be worse than a paralyzed body? A life paralyzed by sin. Only Jesus has authority to heal broken bodies and lives.

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