

## Gospel of John - episode 10

### Chapter 4 part 3 and chapter 5

Welcome to our Sharing on St. John's Gospel. We now come to the last section of Chapter 4, and we have the Cure of the Nobleman's Son. This is John 4:43-54. When two days were over, Jesus left for Galilee. That is, immediately after the Resurrection of Samaria, Jesus brought his disciples back to where they felt much more comfortable, which is in their own area in Galilee, because most of them came from there. "He himself had declared that there was no respect for a prophet in his own country". You find that is a bit strange as an introduction to going back to Galilee! "But on his arrival, the Galileans received him well, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem during the festival which they, too, had attended". Oh, dear, we are back to the people of Israel again, the chosen people, and they are really miracle hungry. It upsets Jesus that they are miracle hungry because they will be looking for the signs, and they won't be looking to penetrate the mystery of his Person. We have seen just how quickly the people of Samaria could come to Jesus when they were open to receiving him as a Person.

When he says that 'a prophet is not accepted in his own country', he has just been accepted as a prophet in Samaria! They have just accepted him as the Messiah and the Saviour of all the world. Now he comes back to Galilee, and he is just the nice young man who is working all these miracles. Anyway, we know him. We see he comes from Nazareth, and we know his family, and we know all of that.... that problem is dealt with in the Synoptic Gospels. John just mentioned a prophet is not acceptable, so the miracle hungry Galileans are like the people in Jerusalem. But if they look at the miracles only, they are never going to see him. St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 2:22 that the Jews demand miracles, and the Greeks, they look for wisdom. So, this demand for miracles actually becomes a real obstacle to knowing who Jesus is because they are reading him on the wrong level. They just want to get healed, or they want to get fed, or they want to be comfortable, or whatever.... and this nice young man is doing it; yes, he has this wonderful teaching and so on.... But, if they do not go beyond the sign to the giver, they are never going to penetrate the mystery of his Person, and he is going to have so much trouble with them.

The strange thing is that the chosen people will kill Jesus in the end, disregarding his signs. Having given all the signs to show who he was, they will still kill him. So just responding to him through signs is very, very low; it is not right. We have to make absolutely certain that in our own lives that we are seeking him and not just seeking signs and wonders as well. On Jesus's previous visit to Cana of Galilee, we had him inaugurating the Kingdom of God at a wedding. Now, in this particular miracle, it is fascinating the way John does it. He presents things very differently to the Synoptics. John concentrates on two people, a father and his son, and the way he does this is absolutely fascinating. This is John 4:46. "He went again to Cana of Galilee". So, his second sign is also in the same place, Cana of Galilee. Now, the last time he showed them that he was the Messiah, and he was going to give the overflowing gift of wine and so on, where he had changed the water into wine.

"Now, there was a court official there whose son was ill at Capernaum, and hearing that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went and asked him to come and cure his son because he was at the point of

death". Notice the very practical thing: Jesus has arrived; He heals people... I have someone that needs to be healed. He needs to come. None of the wonder and glory of who he is. Jesus stopped him up short and gave him a reply that not only shocked the man, but shocks us, the readers as well. "So, you would not believe unless you see signs and wonders", he said. Oh, my goodness! But you, the reader, will be at a disadvantage if you have not studied this, because the 'you' is plural; it is not singular. You realise that John is identifying this man with the miracle hungry crowd. And the 'you' is the crowd that he is talking about. You won't believe unless you see signs and wonders! That was actually the problem that Jesus had with the chosen people. It seemed that they could not get past it. But this man's son is actually dying, so it is not the time for discussion.

In verse 49, he said, "Sir", of course, that's the translation of 'Kyrie, Lord'. So, this man is a believer. Sir, answered the official, "Come down before my child dies". In other words, this is urgent. This is a 999 call. So, Jesus said, "Go home. Your son will live". I will give you the details of this afterwards. Verse 50, **the man**. We had the court official before this. Now it's the man. "The man believed what Jesus said". Oh, what an example for the miracle hungry crowd! He believed in Jesus himself. He believed Jesus' word, and he started on his way home. He went and he obeyed the word of God. Is there going to be a miracle? Yes. But for the right reason, and that is because the man recognised who Jesus is and obeyed the word of God. He started on his way. "And while he was still on his journey back, his servants met him with the news that the boy was alive. He asked when the boy began to recover. They said the fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour". Well, that is one o'clock in the day, at the hottest time of the day - the most unlikely time of the day for a fever to leave.

The father realised. Watch this. Court official. man. father. Do you notice that on this journey, this man is being transformed? Just as the Samaritan woman had been transformed on her journey from Jesus back to the town of Sychar. He is transformed because he has believed in Jesus himself and because he obeys the word of God. So, the Father realised that this was exactly the time that Jesus said, 'your son will live'. So, John is saying, that the moment this man put real faith in Jesus and took his first step in real faith, the miracle worked. So, if you need miracles in your life, you know exactly what to do. Watch this for a second harvest: we had a harvest in Samaria. Now we are going to have a harvest in Galilee. He and his entire household believed. John says this was the second sign. So, you have to ask yourself, was the sign the healing of the boy? Or was the sign the transformation of the man? Which is it? Sometimes you know what the sign is. Sometimes you have got to think about it. I'm going to let you stew that for a minute.

In Chapter 3, John identified Nicodemus with the problems of the Judeans. In Chapter 4, he identified a Samaritan woman with the problems of Samaria. This man seems to be identified with the problems of the Galilean crowd, and with all others as well. So, when Jesus challenged him, he is actually challenging the whole crowd. Now, we know that the man who came to Jesus was called a court official simply by John. He loves leaving everything anonymous. He does not like naming people because he would prefer you got the message that is given to you rather than hang on to a name. But we know that this court official was the steward in the house of King Herod, and his name was Chuza. We also know from the mystics that his wife, Johanna, was one of the women disciples of Jesus. So, they were a couple who

actually knew Jesus, and so he would come to Jesus in faith. But he would have travelled approximately 20 miles on horseback to get to Jesus. Because he was a wealthy man, he would be able to come on horseback. The poor would have to come on a donkey or walking.... he came quite a distance to ask Jesus.

Now, he is a believer. He knows who Jesus is, so he would ask Jesus. Hence, it is important to recognise that when Jesus appears to react to him that he is challenging the crowds to come to him in faith, and to recognise who he is and to accept his word and to obey his word, and then they will have the miracles that they need as well. The problem that the Galilean crowds have is that they have got to go beyond signs and wonders, and they have got to believe in the Person of Jesus himself. Jesus is going to tell us in the second half of the gospel that "I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life". He told us already in John 1:4 "all that came to be had life in him". And in John 5:21, "the Son can give life to whoever he wants". So, we have to remember every everything that we have been told about him to know what John is actually saying to us here. And it is not just the healing of a boy that John is actually talking about.

He's talking about much more than that.... we have to know that the person who is speaking to this court official is the Creative, Spirit-filled, Life-giving Word of God Incarnate. The person who can say, 'I am he' to the Samaritans. Therefore, he can give not only material life, but spiritual life. If the only thing that is going to be done here in this is to give material life to a little boy, that is not why Jesus came. Not at all. The transformation of the father was going to bring a great harvest, which was that his entire household would believe. The transformation of the father is a bigger miracle than healing the Son. Healing the child for Jesus was very easy. The child would have no resistance whatsoever to the Grace that Jesus was giving to him. So, the interior transformation of the man is what is going to bring this new harvest to Jesus, just as the interior transformation of the woman brought the harvest of Samaria. Unfortunately, there was no interior transformation of Nicodemus, and therefore, there was no harvest in Judea. It is really sad. But we need to actually see what John is saying to us.

So, the man gives Jesus a very urgent command. He says, 'Lord, come down before my son dies'. And Jesus said, 'If that's what you want, go home because your son will live'. What Jesus said seems to be a contradiction of what the man is saying. The child is dying; the clock is ticking. It is going to take me 20 miles on horseback to go back; he could be dead before I get there. You have got to do it now. It seems that he thought Jesus would travel on the horse with him to go back! In other words, that Jesus would have to be physically present to do the miracle. Instead of that, what Jesus does is he sends forth his Word, and it comes to be. Now, I have given you lots of text on that already, haven't I? When you go back to the Book of Genesis, God sent forth his word, and everything came to be. 'Let there be light, and there was light. Let us make man in our own likeness', and man was made in the likeness of God. It is God's divine creative Word that goes forth. The Galileans need to realise that it is the creative, powerful, graceful, and grace-filling Word of Jesus that is going to transform them and everybody else.

The miracle, the first miracle that happens here is that the man accepted the Divine Word Incarnate. He accepted that this Divine Word did not need to be physically present to operate, that God's Word is operative everywhere at all times, that God is present everywhere, see Psalm 139. There is a wonderful



dialogue between them; the cry that the man gives to Jesus is much deeper than he knows himself - just as the thirst of the woman earlier - the woman of Samaria, was much deeper than she knew. The need of Nicodemus was much deeper than he understood either. So, what this man does not realise is that the whole of humanity is crying out to Jesus in these words, 'Lord, come down from where you are to where we are at. Come down from your great height to where we are at, where we are all disintegrating, sick and dying. Come down and save us'. The crowds do not realise that this man is speaking, not only in their name, but in the name of all humanity, asking Jesus to save us. Now, the crowd will say the right words to Jesus when he enters into Jerusalem, finally as the Messiah, and they will say - we say, Hosannah, which means, 'save us now'. But they were saying it like we say, Hallelujah, but Hallelujah means, 'praise God'. We could say the word without praising God. They were saying, Hosannah, without realising they were saying, 'save us now'. That is precisely what Jesus came to do, which was to save them now.

So, when this man asks the Messiah and the Divine Word in incarnate, to come down from his great height... he has come down from Heaven and has become Incarnate. He has come into the world. We were told this in John 3:16, that God sent his only son not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved. The 'son' in this, is not just this child of this particular father. The son is the whole of humanity. It is man himself, and man, himself must be healed of his deadly illnesses, which are all spiritual, really - and brought back from death to life - that is the most wonderful thing that has to happen. In obedience, the man actually does it, and he allows the creative power of God to actually work with him.

And then, of course, you get another miracle, because when the man goes home and he discovers that the Divine Word actually did work at the time that he took his first step. That for his entire household is enough. They do not see Jesus. They are not in contact with him personally. They have taken the testimony of this man, just as the Samaritans took the testimony of the woman of Samaria. Now, the household will be not only all his relatives, but all his servants and everybody to do with him, because whatever the head of the household would do, the whole household will follow. You will see this in Acts 10 as well, when the whole household of Cornelius comes into the church. You can apply to this household the words that Jesus said to Thomas after the Resurrection in John 20:29, "blessed are those who have not seen and have believed". This miracle would make Jesus very happy because the man believed and his whole household believed. The miracle hungry crowds are not getting the message at all. They just want the goodies that Jesus is giving to them. Or as we would say nowadays, they want the freebies, but they do not really want what Jesus is offering. Notice the transformation of the man himself. I pointed it out to you before.

He came to Jesus in his official status. Initially, he was a court official, therefore a very important person. Then when Jesus challenges him he goes more into his interior, the man, the real person, responds. Finally, when we need to have the transformation that needs to happen, it's the daddy who speaks. I think that is fantastic. We have this wonderful transformation of this particular person. But of course, if this man is to receive his miracle, something else has got to happen. John is asking you to look deeper into the text than you have looked already. If humanity is crying out to Jesus to save us, and if humanity is saying that you have got to come down to our level and you have got to touch our problems where we are at, Jesus is going to have to go to the Cross. We have already been told this in chapter three, that the Son of Man

will have to be lifted up on the Cross before being lifted up into glory. Jesus will have to pay a horrendous price. In other words, Jesus, the Beloved Son of the Father, will have to exchange places with this child and this man.

So, that father represents God the Father, and that son can represent God the Son. For the child who is the human being, to be redeemed and brought back to life and brought to this level of being in the Kingdom of God, then the Beloved Son of the Father has to die. The exchange is life for life. Therefore, you are being given an explanation of miracles which is different to what the Galilean crowds think. They think that they can just get free bread from Jesus, or that they can get free physical healing from Jesus, or that they can get free water from Jesus. These just material things. If he heals you now, you can get sick again. We are going to discover that in chapter 5. So that cannot be it. If you only want free water, well, you are going to get thirsty again. That cannot be it. If the thing you are looking for is merely material, that cannot be it.

Jesus wants to raise us all to this higher level so that the water we are talking about is Salvation, that the spirit we are talking about is the overflowing gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that if he is to raise the human race from all its sickness of sin and death, then He Himself has to take all of that sickness and sin upon Himself. He has to take it to the Cross, and He has to kill every single sin on the Cross. He has to become a curse to release us from the curse of sin. He has to go into death to take us out of death.

When we get to Chapter 11, we will come to the final point in this half of the gospel of what has started here, and that is for the Son of God to call each one of us out of the grave, then He has to go into it first. It is the most incredible thing. The gospel writer, John the Evangelist, is telling us that the price Jesus pays for the gifts that He gives is very, very high. It is the price of the life of the Son of God. He is the Lamb of God, so He has to pay for the sins of the world. The Galilean crowds do not see that sickness, sin, death, and hell are all the results of the Fall.

Let me give you an example that fits the Synoptics more than John, because John will not use this imagery.

When Jesus healed the paralytics, He ended up paralysed on the Cross. When He healed blindness, He was blinded by blood, sweat, and tears on the Cross. When He healed leprosy, he was a leper on the Cross. He had to literally take our illnesses, and He had to do all the reparation that we should have done, and probably could not do. So, very gently here at the end of Chapter 4, he says that the beloved Son of the eternal Father must give his life if the son of man - the little son of man, the child, humanity - is to be raised from the dead - that the rest of us need to put our faith in him. This is the end of Chapter 4 of John's Gospel. Thank you for listening.

## **INTERVAL**

Welcome to our Sharing on St. John's Gospel. We now move into Chapter 5, and we move into a new stage of the revelation of Jesus. All the signs that we have seen up to now, all point towards the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus, where everything will be completed and everything will be given.



Up to now, it was the uniqueness of the Person of Jesus that was shown to us. We have to know - we the readers - and we, the listeners, we have to know who He is. Otherwise, we are not going to understand the issues in the great controversies of this gospel. John has shown us Jesus manifesting himself to an ever-wider audience through friends and through the Judeans, the Galileans, the Samaritans, and others. We now come to a stage where John changes his emphasis. From here on in, it is not Samaritans we are dealing with; it is not Gentiles. John concentrates completely on the Judeans, and on the great controversies that took place between Jesus and the Judean leaders in Jerusalem. What John does is that he now places each one of his chapters in the context of one of the great feasts of Israel. What he wants to do is to show us that Jesus not only fulfils the feasts of Israel, but that He surpasses them completely. And on another level, I should say on another time scale, John, who is writing this at the end of the first century, is also telling us about the great controversies that were going on between the Christians in his church and the Jewish Synagogue at the time when John was alive and the answers that the Church was giving to the unbelieving world.

it is important that we will see this and understand it. In fact, the whole gospel of John is the testimony of John's Church to the unbelieving world as to who Jesus actually is. And that is why it is given to us very methodically, step by step. So, let us take some of the signs that are given from here. For example, the first one that we have here in chapter 5, does take place at a feast, but John does not name the feast because he wants to concentrate on the trouble that Jesus had with the Judean leaders with regard to his observance of the Sabbath.

The second sign - the miracle of the loaves in Chapter 6 - is in the context of the Passover and the manna in the desert. Then we have the long discourse between chapter 7 and 8, and it is in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles. Finally, we have a short discourse in chapter 10, and it is in the context of the Feast of Dedication in the middle of winter. So, we are seeing the wonderful testimony that John and his church gave to the unbelieving world during his own time.

So, I will read the text, and then I will give you a detailed comment on it. This is John 5:1. "Sometime later, there was a Jewish festival". You see, he does not name it because he wants to emphasise the Sabbath. "And Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, at the sheep pool in Jerusalem, there was a building called Bethesda and it had five porticos. And under these were crowds of sick people, blind, lame, and paralysed, waiting for the water to move. For at intervals, the angel of the Lord came down into the pool and the water was disturbed. And the first person to enter the water after this disturbance was a cure of any ailment that they had. Now, there was one man who had an illness that had lasted 38 years. And when Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been in this condition for a long time, he said, 'Do you want to be well again?'" That may seem a strange question to ask a person who has been sick for a long time. Do you want to be well again? Sir, he said- that is 'Kyrie, Lord, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed, and while I am still on the way, someone else gets in before me. Jesus said, Get up, pick up your sleeping mat, and walk. The man was cured at once. He picked up his mat, and he walked away".

Now, the pool of Bethesda was beside the sheep pool near the temple. The sheep pool was where they washed the sheep and the lambs before taking them for slaughter and sacrifice. And this pool was beside it. Back in the 1950s and '60s, there was great controversy among the scholars that there was no such a place, and I felt it was a great triumph when they actually discovered the pool of Bethesda under the Church of St. Anne in Jerusalem! The meaning of the name is the House of Mercy - yet only one person was healed per year! So, some people could have spent the whole of their lives waiting for this mercy.

Now, this is one of John's clues for you to look deeper into the text and don't just read it on the surface level, because on the surface level, things are actually very simple - that is not where John is going. You know enough about John's gospel now to realise that each thing has deep and weighty meaning. So, it was to this place that Jesus came to show the loving kindness of the Heart of our God. The Old Testament spoke of God's kindness, and it was that touching Mercy of God that Jesus decided to show here. The man that Jesus actually approached may have been the worst case in the place because we already have looked at the fact that God does not think the way we do. His ways are as different from ours as the heavens are from the earth.

If we were going into that situation with our limited resources, we might say, 'well, we will deal with the ones who have some chance of living - and we might let the worst ones die. Jesus went for the worst one. He went for the one that nobody considered had any hope because the man he actually approached was almost dead, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. We would call him the walking dead. And Jesus decided to give him a spiritual resurrection, not just a physical healing. If you look at my hand - that's just a body. Someday I will have to leave that behind me, and it will be called 'the remains'. So, if the healing is confined to the body, that is not the most important part of me. It is the part of me that is going to live forever that needs to be healed, that needs to be raised from the dead. So, this is why you will find that Jesus won't emphasise the material and the physical. He will go much further than that.

Why does John say there were five porticos? The Jewish people at the time were not allowed to make any images because of the prohibition that is given in the Torah. But what they did was that they used numbers symbolically, and the number five represents the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The ordinary people did not use the word 'Torah' like the scholars did. They just simply said 'The Law'. So, when you hear the word 'the Law', it is the 'Torah' - it is the first five books of the Bible. These five porticos indicated the Word of God, which was the source of life for them.

Now the people believed that an angel of the Lord stirred the waters, so there must have been some medicinal effect in these waters, but it could not have been much - because if only one person is healed, that is pretty poor for medicinal waters, so John must be trying to tell something else to us. The crowds of people were there all waiting for 'maybe it will be my time'. It is a bit like somebody waiting to win the lottery, and the chances of winning it are a million to one or more. So, the context tells us that this whole place represents the entire world. It represents all Israel before the time of Christ because it was not an angel that was coming to save them. It was the Lord himself! That is what Isaiah 63:8-9 said: "It was neither messenger nor angel, but it was his own Presence that saved them. In his love and compassion, he redeemed them himself". So, they did not have to wait for medicinal waters, and they did not have to wait for an angel to start the waters. So, you can see that their faith level was actually fairly low. These

people waiting for some magic represent the whole world waiting for some absolutely extraordinary thing to happen when God is present and his Word is so powerful and his love is so extraordinary.

Looking at the thing from the 'above' level, from the level that Jesus sees it, these people are spiritually sick. They are unable to see; unable to walk, they are overcome by the sheer weight of living. So, even though the five porticos point to the Law or to the Word of God, they were not getting healing from that. It was not giving them life. The water was pretty useless as well, if only one person was going to be healed. Instead of calling it a house of mercy, I would call it a house of depression, because so little was being done. What was needed was for the real angel of the Lord to come, the Divine Word Incarnate, the Beloved Son, who is the embodiment of the love of God, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only son not to condemn the world, but that the world would be saved through him". He was the one who, in his Passion, death and Resurrection, was truly going to stir the waters, and make those waters life-giving in what we know now as the gift of Baptism, when the waters would be poured upon everybody's head who wanted it, and they would all receive the same gift of becoming a child of God.

He wanted to raise everybody from spiritual death to spiritual life. Now, I have told you all the time that when you come to a new chapter in John, you have to remember everything that was given to you before, because you and I, the readers, have much more information than anybody in the context. The people who are actually there with Jesus do not have the information that you and I have. We know that Nicodemus encapsulated all the problems of the Judean people, that the Samaritan woman encapsulated the problems of Samaria, that the court official encapsulated the problems of the Galileans. So, this man, who is 38 years sick, represents the desperation of everybody in the old order, including the millions who are living in quiet despair in the world today. People who do not know that life has a meaning and do not have any sense of destiny. There are people alive today who do not know why they get up in the morning! In every way except the physical, they are the walking dead, and they are the ones who need Jesus as the Angel of the Lord more than they need the air they are breathing.

This man also represents the people under the Old Covenant. How do you know that? Because John has given you another clue. He says he was 38 years sick. Is there some significance in the 38? Oh, yes. John is wonderful. He gives you lots of clues. The people of God had waited 38 centuries for the Messiah, 3,800 years. When Moses was sent to them to liberate them from Egypt and take them to the promised land, they spent 38 years wandering in the wilderness before they actually came to the promised land. So, this man really does represent them, and when you watch what goes on between Jesus and this man, you will realise that he really does represent them. Jesus alone can cure the incurable disease of man, and that incurable disease is not leprosy! It is not cancer, nor any other name that you can put on it. That incurable disease is sin, which is the cause of all our problems. Jesus wants to come and cure the incurable disease of man and bring us all into a new era of grace and love. This is why he chooses the worst case so that they will see that it really is God who is coming to save them.

It is no angel or prophet; it is the Lord himself and he is coming out of sheer love - as we read in John 3:16. Salvation comes from his initiative. The man did not ask Jesus for anything; he probably did not even look at Jesus because there would have been plenty of people milling around, so, it is sheer grace



that he receives. If the Lord comes to you and he wants to give you something, no matter what it is, the one person who will never override your free will is God; human beings will try; the demon will certainly do it, but God won't. Jesus said to the man, 'Do you want to be well again?' Now, it would seem to me a very strange question to ask a person who is ill, 'do you want to be well again?' You might presume that they do, but you know for some people, there are secondary benefits for being sick; you can become passive. This man has become passive. Other people are looking after him. Other people are serving him. Other people are sacrificing themselves to look after his needs. If he says 'yes' to becoming well, then he is going to have to change from being passive to active. He will have to take up the responsibilities of life again, and will have to respond to the grace that is given to him. He will have to agree to live the new life; It is not just some magic. It is not that. It is a gift. Do you want it? Will you take it? This is terribly important. The reaction of the man is very telling as well; he said neither yes nor no. Do you want to be well again? Sir, he said, I have nobody to help me – he is blaming other people! When I try to do something, others get in in front of me. So, he did not actively say, 'Yes, I would like to be well again'. He did not actively say to Jesus, 'can you make me well? I put my faith in you'.

This man really represents the Judeans and the chosen people because Jesus has come to them as their Saviour, and He is asking them, 'do you want your Messiah? Do you want the Salvation that your Messiah is giving to you?' Now, we know that the answer is 'no'. They want miracles, all right! They want free bread; they want free healing; they want life to be more comfortable, but He gets no indication that they want to come onto this higher plane and enter the Kingdom of God - so far, anyway. Individuals do, but the crowd does not - so it is Israel that is being passive. Israel has said neither yes nor no to the Messiah. Jesus is trying to provoke them to say yes or no, one or the other but Israel remained passive. They accepted his miracles, but they did not accept who he was, not only that, she was not grateful!

One of the fascinating things for me is that when Jesus said to this man, 'pick up your sleeping mat and walk', the man was cured at once. This is verse 9. He got up, he picked up his mat, and he walked away. He did not say, 'who are you? why did you choose me? You have given me an extraordinary gift. Thank you'. He did not say anything that you would expect him to say. That is why I am underlining the passivity that is in the man.... so okay, I'm healed so I can walk away with no obligation at all of gratitude. When Jesus talks to the mystics and the saints, he says that the human race are absolutely ungrateful for God has given to them. Israel was passive to Jesus as well. She, as a nation, showed no gratitude to Jesus, no acceptance of the Salvation that he gave her. In fact, the nation killed him.

Before we criticise Israel let us look at the awful fact today that so many Christians have walked away from Christ; they have walked away from his church and they show no gratitude whatsoever for the gift of Salvation that Jesus brought. In other words, what the scriptures show up is humanity, not just one particular group of human beings. Now look at the gift that Jesus gave in verse 8, when he said, 'Get up, pick up your sleeping mat, and walk'. This is pure gift from God; it is also pure love from God. The man is not even grateful for it, but John wants you to hear something else. I have emphasised it before, and I will emphasise it again. How was the man healed? Because I have got you asking those questions from the beginning.

How did the water change into wine? When did the woman become transformed? When did the child become healed? When did this man become healed? It was the Creative, Spirit-filled, Life-giving Word of God that went right into him - look into the Book of Genesis where the Creative, Spirit-filled, Life-giving Word of God went out into the chaos before Creation, and He brought everything into being. This is the power of God's Word. Anybody who was looking on would realise that this man was healed by the power of God alone, by the Word of God that left Jesus's mouth to go into that man. Jesus never touched him. It is terribly important to look at the details so that we get the full message that is actually there. So, here is a question that I will try and answer for you, but the question should come into your head. Is the man really healed? The answer is no. Why is he not really healed? Because he has accepted physical healing, but he has not yet accepted the grace that Jesus has offered to him. There is a second stage in this man's healing, and I will at least read it in this particular section.

This is what St. John says. "Now, that day happened to be the Sabbath. So, the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been cured, 'It is the Sabbath. You are not allowed to carry your sleeping mat'. And he replied, 'But the man who cured me told me to pick up your mat and walk'. They asked, 'who is this man who told you to pick up your mat and walk? But the man had no idea who he was'". You notice this theme that is running through all the time? He had no idea. "Since Jesus had disappeared into the crowd, and after a while, Jesus met him in the temple and he said, 'Now that you are well again, do not sin anymore, or something worse could happen to you'". Was the man really healed? No! The physical healing is only stage one. The spiritual healing is stage two, and the spiritual healing is the most important one. This man must go into a stage of conversion and repentance. He must change his life. He must accept the grace that is given to him, otherwise he will lose his healing.

Why does Jesus say to him, Don't sin anymore? Because sin is the disaster of the human race. It is sin that brought sickness and death and hell upon us. That is the disaster that Jesus has come to deal with. So, as far as Jesus is concerned, this man is a lost sheep, one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He tries to tell him that he has a choice, and the choice is to accept Salvation or die in your sins. The disaster is to die in your sins. I will leave you thinking about that, and we will continue this dialogue in our next session. Thank you for listening.