

## John 5:1-16 & 9:1-41 – A Tale of Two Men – Part 2

In John 5, Jesus healed a man who was lame for 38 years after commanding him to “rise, take up your bed and walk”. In John 9, Jesus gave sight to a man born blind after commanding him to “go, wash in the Pool of Siloam”. Jesus found both men. They didn’t seek out Jesus. Even though the lame man was by the Pool of Bethesda, the pool played no part in his healing. On the other hand, the man born blind was probably not near the Pool of Siloam but that is where Jesus sent him to wash off the clay which Jesus put on his eyes. Both healings occurred on the Sabbath and the Jewish religious leaders believed Jesus was a Sabbath breaker. But, Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath. He didn’t break it. In part 2, we will look at the men’s interaction with the Jewish religious leaders. We will also look at Jesus’ second encounters with both men.

### **Read John 5:10-14.**

When the Jewish religious leaders told the man who had been lame that it was not lawful for him to carry his bed roll on the Sabbath, how did the man respond? Why did the man mention “the man who healed me”? Did he try to change the subject to the fact that he had been healed after being lame for 38 years? Or, did he try to shift the blame from himself to “the man who healed me”? Shifting blame goes back to the Garden of Eden. When God confronted Adam with his sin, he put the blame on Eve and also on God because God gave Eve to Adam. Eve blamed the serpent. Did the man who was lame exhibit the same nature as Adam and Eve? In verse 12, notice that the leaders did not ask him who healed him but “who is the man who said to you ‘Take up your bed and walk’”. They didn’t care about the healing, their focus was on the breaking of the Sabbath. What did the man say when the leaders asked him, “who is the man”? What does his response say about the man? After his initial encounter with the religious leaders, where did the man go? Did he seek out Jesus?

### **Read John 9:8-12.**

When his neighbors asked him how he received his sight, what did the former blind man say? Notice that they asked “how”. The man first responded with “who”. Jesus had sent the blind man away to wash in the Pool of Siloam. How did the blind man know Jesus’ name? Did the blind man spend any more time with Jesus than the lame man spent with Jesus?

### **Read John 9:13-17.**

Notice that there was no mention of Jesus’ name in 9:15-34. Verse 22 (ESV) has that if anyone confessed that Jesus was the Christ, they would be put out of the synagogue. In the original text, “Jesus” is “he”. But it is apparent that “he” is “Jesus” (when referring to the one who gave sight to the blind man). The Jewish religious leaders never asked who healed the blind man. It seems apparent that the word had already spread that Jesus gave sight to the man born blind. John’s note in verse 22 makes it clear that the center of attention was Jesus. The fact that Jesus gave sight to the man born blind was why the religious leaders were going out of their minds. What did the religious leaders think about Jesus? When they asked the former blind man what he thought about Jesus, what did he say?

**Read John 9:24-34.**

What did the religious leaders want the former blind man to do? What did they say about Jesus? How did the former blind man respond when they told him that they knew that Jesus was a sinner? What do verses 27-29 say about the former blind man's desire to follow Jesus? In verse 24, the religious leaders said "**we know** that this man is a sinner". I believe the man responded to their accusation in verse 24 by saying in verse 31, "**we know** that God does not listen to sinners". The former blind man was basically saying that he did know that Jesus was not a sinner because Jesus would not have been able to give him sight if Jesus was a sinner. What did the former blind man say about Jesus by implication? What did the religious leaders say about the former blind man? Their views on illness were the same as the disciples at the beginning of the chapter. What did they do to the former blind man?

**Read John 5:14-15.**

Where did Jesus find the former lame man? Notice that Jesus found him and not the other way around. What did Jesus say to the former lame man? What did Jesus mean? What would be worse than being lame for 38 years? Do you think Jesus' statement was a reflection on why the man had been lame for 38 years? Is illness sometimes the result of specific sin? What did the former lame man find out about Jesus?

**Read John 9:35-41.**

Jesus heard what had happened to the former blind man and Jesus found him. We are not told where Jesus found him. What did Jesus ask the former blind man? Why do you think Jesus used the phrase "Son of Man"? The KJV has "Son of God". How did the man respond to Jesus' question? What did Jesus reveal to the man? How did the man respond to Jesus' reveal? What did Jesus mean by his statement in verse 39? What camp did the former blind man fall into? What camp did the Pharisees fall into? How were the Pharisees blind? How did the former blind man exhibit "sight" even before he received his physical sight?

**Read John 5:15-16.**

What did the former lame man do after his encounter with Jesus in the temple? Why did he seek out the Jewish religious leaders? Did he want to make sure that Jesus got credit for the healing or did he do it to take the heat off himself? Remember that the leaders did not ask him anything about his healing. For all they knew he may have been cured of a cold. We are not told what his motives were. All we can see is the results of his actions. What resulted when the former lame man told the leaders that Jesus healed him? That is, he told the leaders that Jesus was the one who told him to "break the Sabbath". Was the former lame man so naive that he thought the religious leaders would congratulate Jesus on performing the lame man's healing and forget about the Sabbath offense?

John Calvin wrote in his commentary, "Nothing was farther from his intention than to make Christ an object of their hatred, and nothing was farther from his expectation than that they would rage so furiously against Christ. His intention, therefore, was pious; for he wished to render to his Physician the honor which was justly due to him." How was Calvin able to divine the man's intentions? Where in the text does it tell us that the man's motives were pure as the wind driven snow?

Do you believe with John Calvin, Matthew Henry, and many others that the man who had been lame for 38 years was a model of faith, obedience, and purity? Or do you believe that this man was more comfortable with the religious leaders than he was with Jesus? He sought out the religious leaders. We don't have any record of him seeking Jesus. He walked away from Jesus twice.

For what it is worth, my take on the man who was lame for 38 years is that he is a "remember Lot's wife" lesson. He was a real person but he was also representative of those who were a product of the Jewish religious leaders. He sought healing from the Pool of Bethesda and not Jesus. He wanted to please the Jewish religious leaders more than he wanted to please Jesus. It is no coincidence that the same chapter includes Jesus' discussion with the religious leaders. He said that they were looking for eternal life in the wrong place. Eternal life is only found in Jesus (John 5:39-40). He said that they sought glory from one another and not the glory that comes from the only God (John 5:44). Just like the lame man sought physical healing from the wrong source, the Jewish religious leaders sought eternal life from the wrong source. The lame man and the religious leaders were people pleasers and not God pleasers.