

GOSPEL / THE IMPOTENT MAN

A Gospel Message by George Bates. The Meeting House. Randalstown. Co., Antrim. Northern Ireland. UK.

Preached on 7th JULY 2002

READING:- JOHN 5 : 1-18 + 24

Verse 1. "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

*It may well have been **The Feast of the Passover**, but we cannot be positively sure which feast it was.*

*Nevertheless we can be sure that **Jerusalem was packed out**, as all Israel gathered from across the entire land, into **the Temple city**, and **Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son**, was definitely there.*

Verse 2. "Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches."

***On the East side of the city of Jerusalem**, there is a Gate which marks the site of the martyrdom of Stephen, (while Saul of Tarsus was looking on,) and it is called **St. Stephen's Gate**.*

*Is also called **THE SHEEP GATE**, (it's ancient name),*

*and sometimes **THE LIONS GATE** because of the figures of Lions upon it. (**CARVED INTO THE STONES**)*

*Just to the right-hand side as you enter **the Sheep Gate**, you can see the archaeological site, where **they have dug right down 100 feet into the ground** and they have uncovered the whole area where **this miraculous event** took place, **with nothing to guide them but these very verses.***

*This Pool was called "**Bethesda**," which means "**House of Mercy**", and to this day there are the remains of **5 magnificent Porches** that tower up into the air at that spot.*

It is an amazing experience to look down upon it all**, and to realise that the only thing that is no longer there, is the great multitude of the actual people who were involved in this event, **for they have all moved on, into the Eternal realm, either to Heaven or Hell, a long time ago.

*Now let me read again **verses 3 - 4** and see what the people believed was happening there at that time.*

"In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk,** (which means powerless, incapable or infirm,) **of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For 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."

It was a similar superstition to what we have at Lourdes in South Western France today ... Where 5 million pilgrims go yearly.

*The entire story as recorded in **the Authorised Version of the Scriptures** is definitely found in the*

majority of the original manuscripts.

These Great, Old, Biblical, Scriptural records, are **tremendously accurate HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS.**

As I have already said, **they can trust their authenticity so much,**
that they can dig a hundred feet down into the ground, **and be sure to find the actual places described,**

But we must remember that they were not given by God merely as HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS alone,

but **there is an even greater**

SPIRITUAL REASON for these records as well, so that we can take one thing to represent another in a Symbolic or Parabolic way and then preach the Gospel from them.

These five great heavily populated Porches, remind me of the five great books of the law of Moses, called the Pentateuch.

(Namely:- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.)

And so many poor, lost, broken-down wrecks of ruined humanity, **conglomerate** around these books, **competing for first place**, as they **solicit** the help of some man, or minister, or priest, ... seeking to enter **by their own endeavours**, into the pool of the righteous requirements of the Holiness of God.

But the truth of the matter is that no one can be saved by good behaviour, or by keeping the commandments, or by charitable works, because of our built-in inability to keep the whole Law.

Now we most certainly should seek to keep the commandments, and to do good works of charity, but what I am saying, is that these things will never save your soul from
THE HORRORS OF HELL, IN ETERNITY!

Ephesians 2:8-10 reads,

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Titus 3:5, states,

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Please try to get a glimpse of our Wonderful Saviour in your mind's eye, as our focus is being turned here in **verse 5-6**, to see Him making His way over to a 38 year-old tragedy.

The place was packed!

You could mingle with the crowd and disappear into it, as Our Lord Jesus did in **verse 13**.

"And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When 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?"

Jesus saw him lying there, and knew all the about **the broken-hearted anguish**, and **the oppression of soul** that he had suffered for so long a time now, without hope!

(Maybe it's a woman tonight)

HE KNEW THE TEARS AND THE FEARS OF ALL THOSE YEARS.

How does He know?

Did anyone tell Him?

*No, that wasn't necessary, for He knows everything, because He is **God manifest in the flesh.***

God in human form!

and He has Divine omniscience,

(or all knowingness!)

*The Bible teaches that **The Godhead consists of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.** (The United Three, the Undivided One.)*

He knows everything about you, poor sinner without Christ in the meeting!

*You may think that it is a strange question to be asking a man who is lying waiting in a queue for decades to be healed, "**Do you want to be made whole?**"*

But whenever you think about it, you can see what the Saviour is getting at.

He had spent 38 years in these horrible circumstances!

He can become accustomed to the old cronies around him!

He had conformed to his condition!

He was possibly afraid of the change!

"WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO GET IN FIRST SOME DAY?

Where am I going to live then?

What will I work at?

Will I be able to cope with what is required of me?"

There is no need to be afraid of the change, or of the consequences, if they are God's will for your life.

*There is nothing to fear from **the forgiveness of God** for your sins!*

*There's nothing to fear from **well-being** and **peace** and **joy**, and **satisfaction**, and **freedom** from the miserable bondage that you have suffered for a lifetime!*

*Verse 7 says, "**The 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.**"*

"I have no man"

That's very sad isn't it?

Nobody cares a hoot about this poor lonely broken-hearted soul!

Just think about this statement for a moment.

This is the pathetic story of this poor soul's life, from his own point of view!

It is as if he is saying, ...

"Somebody else always gets in first, and it's not for the want of trying but I have never quite made it."

*"It has all been so frustrating, for all I needed was a wee bit of help, and I would have been in there with a chance, **but nobody cared enough to help me**, so the others who have someone to help them, manage to beat me every time, **and I'm disappointed all over again!**"*

"If there was a prize for just missing it, then I would definitely win it!"

*But watch how we see here, a perfect example of **1 Samuel 16:7b**, where we read, "**for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.**"*

*How often **God chooses** to work with the very one that nobody else wants!
Out of all this **great multitude (Vrs3)** of people, this poor soul is the only one that the Lord chooses to single out and miraculously bless!
He wasn't holding a healing meeting*

*Everyone else is left lying there, as **this man gathers up his sleeping pad and walks out of that tragic place**, a completely new man with a brand new life before him, and a wonderful story to tell!
How often God makes beautiful swans, out of this world's ugly ducklings, through His Sovereign Grace.*

Verses 8-9 states,

"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately (not a gradual thing,) the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath."

Our Lord Jesus Christ is telling this man to do the very thing that he can't do!

This is an important lesson that we must never forget!

***If you have a willingness and a readiness to obey the Lord's commands, ...
then He Himself will give you the Divine Power to do it!***

*It was the same thing, whenever He called Lazarus back from the dead **after 4 days of decomposition in the Grave!***

*Lazarus couldn't help, could he?
He couldn't contribute anything!*

***Our Lord Jesus Christ never asked anyone to do anything that He doesn't empower them to do.
Built into the Divine Command is the Divine enabling!***

So please don't be telling me that you would love to be saved, but you couldn't keep it!

*Can you imagine The Saviour asking the man who was possessed by a whole legion of demons,
"Now before I save you, are you sure you will be able to keep it?"*

Friend, that poor soul couldn't even speak his own name!

It is not the Sheep that keeps the Shepherd, but the Shepherd that keeps the Sheep!

Jude 1:24, says that Jesus Our Wonderful Saviour

"... is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,"

This totally powerless man left that day with a Christ empowered life!

The dynamic of God's Spirit was flooding his being!

A man with a future! **A purpose for living!** A mighty delivering Saviour!

These cold, dead, formal, religious Jews, have spotted him carrying his mattress on the Saturday Sabbath, and they immediately intercept him to tell him to lie down again!

If his miraculous healing involves carrying a mattress on the Seventh Day Sabbath, then they are not going to stand for it.

They have already decreed that **lifting anything heavier than a leaf, is working**, and is therefore breaking the Sabbath!

What I want to know is, **where were these boys for 38 years**, when this poor soul was perishing for the want of a helping hand?

Yet in a flash these experts on religion are dictating to him, what he can do, and what he cannot do.

Well there is no way that he is lying down again!

He is standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free!

Now in **verse 14** we read,

"Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

Isn't it wonderful how that our Lord Jesus Christ takes full responsibility for all those that are His?

He comes seeking for this recently delivered soul, who is being put under pressure by Christless lifeless religionists.

He finds the man in the Temple area, probably giving thanks to God for what has happened to him!

It has been a long time since he was able to enter that Holy Place.

He said unto him,

"Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

Now whenever we come to the subject of **"sickness"** in the scriptures, we must remember that **"sickness"** is not always a result of **"sins"** in the life, ...

and for the benefit of the theologians, I emphasise, that I said **"sins"** (plural)

(The ones that we ourselves have committed,) ...

and not "sin" in the singular. Original sin (if you like.)

Adam was held responsible in the transgression for that, you will remember.

*I know that as far as **the Corinthian Christians** were concerned, many were weak and sickly as a result of their unconfessed sins!*

But it is not always the case!

*In Philippians **chapter 2:27** Epaphroditus was sick because of the intensity of his missionary work for God.*

*Job was sick because of the trial of his faith. **Paul's sickness** was keeping him balanced.*

Daniel was sick after understanding a vision.

The people of God can be sick, because God is working out some hidden purpose of blessing in their lives, specially for them.

The blind man of John ch 9, was going to glorify God as a result of his infirmity.

Even our little babies and children can become ill, at an age when they would have no knowledge of sins.

*So we have got to be careful about **equating sickness with sins** in the life.*

*Nevertheless in this particular case **the root** of this man's disease was indeed "**sin**"*

*That is why the Saviour said,
"**Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more,
lest a worse thing come unto thee."***

*Many are indulging in Sinful Practices that will cost them their lives in these days, like **old nicotine cancer sticks**, and **Drink**, and **Drugs**, and **Deviant Sexual Diseases**, and **tampering with Evil things** that would be better left alone.*

*The Lord Jesus wouldn't be God if He compromised with sin in any way, and He just says "**Sin no more**"*

*Yet we do know also that the Bible teaches us in **11 Chronicles chapter 6: verse 36** (for example,) that*

*"**There is no man which sinneth not**"*

*and again in **Romans 3:23**,*

*"**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**"*

It is impossible for human beings while still in the body, (and therefore having a sin nature,) to achieve a life of sinless perfection, for

"There was none other good enough to pay the price of sin. Christ only could unlock the gate of Heaven and let us in."

Nevertheless a life of wilful and deliberate sins is definitely not a Christian life, ...
and will most assuredly bring down the inevitable consequences of God's Judgement upon the heads of the unsaved, here and now, as well as in Eternity after death, at the Great white Throne of Judgement.

Not to mention incurring the Chastening Hand of God, in the lives of His own dear children, if they were to think that such hypocrisy could be indulged in.

So many tragic people in this little land of ours, are in the grip of
"a worse thing" tonight,
after once knowing and experiencing the Love, and Mercy, and Grace of God in their lives!

Did you once receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?
Were you once associated with the Christian life?

Has the Devil stumbled you and had his way with you?
Has "a worse thing" come upon you?

Listen poor miserable wrecked Prodigal Son!
Listen dear heartbroken Prodigal Daughter!

God loves you more than human tongue can tell!

He has been is waiting and watching for you coming home again from the moment that you turned your back upon Him.

Isaiah 55:6-7 calls out to you,

"Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near:
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts:

and let him return unto the LORD,
and He will have mercy upon him;
and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Now the remainder of this entire chapter, records Christ's answer to these persecuting Jews that are seeking to kill Him, ...

because they believe that He was breaking the Sabbath, ...

(which He wasn't,) ...

and saying that God was His Father, therefore making Himself equal with Almighty God, which He was, because it was perfectly true!

So whenever we read verse 24 of this chapter, you now know exactly when our Lord Jesus said this, ...

and who He said it to!

" Verily, verily, I say unto you,
He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not

come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Down through the centuries scores of millions of souls have entered into Eternal Life, as a result of THIS STAGGERING STATEMENT because of the Person who made it.

There are four things that have gripped my attention in this verse as I have pondered it for this meeting.

*I don't usually do this,
but for the sake of time this evening,
I will tell you from the start what these four things are.*

(A) We have
AN INDESTRUCTIBLE FOUNDATION

(B) We have
AN INFALLIBLE FATHER

©) We have
AN IMMEASURABLE FUTURE

(D) We have
AN INEXHAUSTIBLE FORGIVENESS

Lets start then with the first one.
We have
AN INDESTRUCTIBLE FOUNDATION
FOR THIS POSITIVE PROMISE.

Do you realize just who Jesus Christ our Lord really is, dear unsaved one?

*John the beloved Apostle, who knew our Lord Jesus Christ personally, said concerning Him,
"all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."*

Jesus himself said
"I and the Father are one"
HE REVEALS THE FATHER

*Therefore whenever our Lord Jesus Christ speaks like this, and says,
"Verily Verily, (or truly, truly,)
(Or to bring it into the modern idiom, we would say today,
"With all the conviction of my heart, and with all the earnestness that I possess, I assure you,")*

The old Puritans used to call this expression, "the double emphasis."

*And then when Jesus goes on to say, "**he that heareth my word**"
Then we have to sit up and take notice!*

Because it is not only

*A SURE SIGNPOST TO ETERNITY THAT YOU CAN TRUST,
but it is also
THE ULTIMATE GUARANTEE OF THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!*

*That is why it is not just **Hearing**, but **Heeding** also, that He is talking about! **What more would it take to convince you?***

*(A) So we have
**AN INDESTRUCTIBLE FOUNDATION
FOR THIS POSITIVE PROMISE.***

*If you build your future abode upon the rock of **THE SURENESS OF THE SAVIOUR'S SAYINGS**
then no Storm in existence can move you!*

*Then we have
**AN INFALLIBLE FATHER
FOR OUR PERSONAL PERSUASION.***

*" Verily, verily, I say unto you,
He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, ..."*

*This is "**Faith in God**" that our Wonderful Saviour is referring to!
But its more than that at this point!
It is believing God who sent the Lord Jesus into this world, to be the only Saviour for poor lost sinners **at Calvary!***

*We are preaching "**the sent one**" who alone is God's way of Salvation, to you tonight!*

*" Verily, verily, I say unto you,
**He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, ...
hath everlasting life,***

*(Not "**Will have it one day**" or "**Might have it later**" but "**HATH**" it now!)
That is an established fact!*

*©) We have
**AN IMMEASURABLE FUTURE
FOR OUR PRESENT POSSESSION.***

*This is not only
Unending Human Existence,
but **the very life of Christ Himself forever!***

We cannot ever lose it, and we have already entered into the good of it at salvation!

***"and shall not come into condemnation;
but is passed from death unto life."***

*(D) We have
**AN INEXHAUSTIBLE FORGIVENESS
FOR OUR PERPETUAL PARDON.***

" shall not come into condemnation;"

*We cannot ever lose this salvation, nor our Everlasting life, ...
for **God has made us free from all condemnation**, whenever we put our faith and trust in **the one and only Saviour** who justifies the ungodly!*

*So what exactly is our Lord Jesus Christ in his own characteristic way **double emphasising** here?*

***He is double emphasising** that some poor lost doomed and damned sinner, rushing headlong on their way to the torments of Hell forever, **can instantly be saved from all that**, and in a moment of time they can **"switch tracks"** by simple trust in Him to save them, **and they will receive everlasting life**, that nothing can ever take away from them.*

WHY DOES THE WORD OF THE LORD HAVE TO COME INTO IT AT ALL?

*Because Faith that is **a leap in the dark**, is useless in the salvation of a soul!*

*So many people have said to me recently, **"I say a prayer for forgiveness every night and I couldn't say that I am saved."***

And it is of crucial importance that you understand what Almighty God desires to communicate to you.

The Lord God himself wants sinners to know the things that they need to know.

He does not want you to be ignorant of the method that He uses to reveal His mind and thoughts to you.

THERE IS A SOUL TRANSFORMING WORKING IN THE WORD.

THE WORD DOES THE WORK!

*Are you willing to be made whole by the only pool that can satisfy the righteous demands of a Holy God? **"The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son that cleanseth us from all sin."***

THEN IMPLICIT CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST'S WORD IS ENOUGH! HIS POWER IS SUFFICIENT!

*HIS WORK IS **"Finished!"***

*It is not just the **physical sufferings** that are required!*

*Nor the **mental and emotional or satanical** sufferings!*

*It is **The Sacrificial and Substitutional Soul Torment** that Our Saviour went through on the Old Bloodstained Rugged Cross for you and for me!*

*He willingly became accountable for us before **God the Father**, and bore the Great Judgement and condemnation and Wrath, that **our vile sins** had incurred!*

***The Punishment was all too real**, and had to be meted out upon His thorn crushed head!*

Almighty God had to Smite the Rock you know! God had to bruise Him!

In Leviticus 17:11 the Lord says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

This is why He could promise so earnestly from the depths of His heart, that Redeemed Believers "Shall not come into condemnation,..."

IT CANNOT HAPPEN!

That is why our Lord Jesus is so emphatic about the fact that all judgement is gone, for believer's, - Because He knew that He was the one who would pay in full for it at Calvary.

*"Payment God will not twice demand!
First at my Bleeding Sureties Hand and then again at mine!"*

"There is Wonder working Power in the Precious Blood of The Lamb!"

*He not only promises Rest for a Burdened Soul,
but that same soul "is passed from death unto life".*

This is IMMEDIATE SALVATION!

INSTANTANEOUS CONVERSION!

"The vilest offender that truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives."

*Think with me of
(A) **THE DYING THIEF**
From public execution to paradise!*

*(B) **ZACCHAEUS**
Jesus said to him "Today is salvation come to this house"*

*©) **THE PUBLICAN** in The Temple
He went home to his house justified.*

*(D) **THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR**
He was ready to plunge the sword!*

*(E) **PAUL** on the Damascus Road. Saul of Tarsus the persecutor becomes a preacher!*

*(F) **THE DEMONIAK** was a madman in the cemetery, & now in the ministry! These are all examples of immediate conversion or instantaneous salvation.
What about you tonight?
Do you want to be saved by Grace?*

All Redeemed out of the slave market of sin by the precious, sacrificially shed, blood of Christ.

Maybe you're asking

"BUT HOW CAN I KNOW FOR SURE PREACHER THAT I HAVE RECEIVED THIS GIFT?",

*It doesn't happen to you when you are sleeping, or when you didn't notice it!
The word of God says **"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"**.*

Illustrate:- Mary in the burning building.