



**SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Tuesday, October 11, 2022**

**Scripture: John 5:9b-14**

**TITLE: Not a Ticket to Legalism**

Have you ever scolded a child for doing the right thing? I have. A kid pushes another kid not out of malice but instead to protect them. Or getting out of their room at bedtime to check on a crying baby? The inclination is to correct the action than evaluate the context.

Well, Jesus experienced rebuke for His righteous act on the Sabbath. What happened? Let's turn back to John 5:9b-14.

Now that day was the Sabbath. 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." But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. 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."

We are picking it back up where we left off yesterday. Yesterday, Jesus saw and called out a 38-year disabled person. We don't know what the issue was, but he had been ill or crippled for 38 years. He's been waiting year after year to be placed in the Pool of Bethesda so it would heal him. There was no true healing that happened there. It was superstition, but he had no other option.

Jesus knows his story and asks, "Do you want to be healed?" The man says, "Of course, but no one will get me into the pool at the magic time." In other words, he didn't know Jesus or believe in His power. But Jesus extends grace and heals him. The man walks away.

But we see the problem at the end of verse 9. It was the Sabbath. Remember how much we've seen the problem with religion so far in the book of John. Jesus has been flipping religion on its head. Salvation isn't by work. It's by a gift of spiritual rebirth. Living water is a gift. It can't be drawn from a well.

The Jewish leaders were adamant about following the law. They had 39 categories of things you could not do on the Sabbath. Not things...39 categories! A wealth of religion resulted in bondage. They forgot that after God created the universe, he rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Not because He was tired. It was because He was done! God gave us the Sabbath for worship and rest. But it was not meant to be a free ticket to legalism.

Well, Jesus goes out of His way and reminds the man, “You are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” Some people think Jesus is teaching that sin results in physical illness. It is true some sins can result in physical consequences. But Jesus’ point is that “Remember, that pool didn’t heal you. That pharisaic religion didn’t heal you. I did. And there is a greater sickness: sin. There is one cure: me. If you don’t resolve this, something worse will happen. What’s worse than a 38-year illness or disability? Hell for eternity.

Jesus is the solution to your greatest problem: sin. Jesus is the solution for your daily battles: playing god and playing the game of religion.

So here’s my challenge for you today: If you’re not a follower of Jesus, how well is your way of life working for you? Is your pathway to success in life and eternity working out? Jesus knows it will never work. You need real healing. Will you believe him? Consider doing so today!

If you’re a follower of Jesus, what is it in your life that is causing you to default to those legalistic tendencies? The Jews were mad at Jesus because He dared to heal on the Sabbath. We, too, put in unhelpful rules in our walk with Jesus.

Jesus came to heal us from our ultimate sickness. Will you believe it and allow Him to free you today?