

## Session 2

March 12, 2023

### JESUS RESTORED MY LIFE

John 5:2-11; 19-21

An entire industry has emerged in the realm of recycling: it's *restoration*. Houses are restored and "flipped" for a profit. Old cars are restored and auctioned off. Furniture destined for the dumpster is picked up, restored, and put to good use. What was once considered someone's trash is being restored to become someone else's treasure. And so it is with the God's children. Fallen mankind, once helpless and hopeless, is being restored and put to good use. And God restores each of us, one person at a time. Our text this week demonstrates God at work in one man's life.

**Utter despair (vv. 1-5).** The drama played out here is marked by interesting details. The festival is not named, but the place certainly is. The city, the gate, the pool, and the porches are clearly identified. The healing event was marked by throngs of the sick and lame seeking healing from the stirred waters of the pool of Bethesda (which means "house of mercy"). Verse 4 doesn't show up in some Bible translations because the manuscript evidence for it is in some doubt. But it has no bearing on the story or the belief in the healing powers of those waters, as the sick man suggested in verse 7. Notice the emphasis given to the man here. While his illness is not mentioned, three characteristics stand out, all of which point to his despair. First, his ailment had affected him for 38 years (v. 5). Second, his ailment left him unable to move. Third, and often overlooked, the man had no one to help him. It's hard not to feel sorry for this man! For reflection: *My dad always said, "When you think you have it bad, look around. Somebody always has it worse." Do you think that is a biblical sentiment? How do you think Jesus would respond to that popular statement?*

**Unexpected deliverance (vv. 6-11).** While this sick man was clearly *helpless*, he was certainly not *hopeless*. Day after day the stricken man stayed by the pool, hoping for that one slim chance that he would somehow make it first to the stirred surface of those healing waters. Jesus' question in verse 6 was rhetorical. Of course he wanted to get well! Verse 7 indicates the man pulled together whatever strength he had to drag himself in, but never succeeded in being the first. Without further consideration, Jesus commanded the man to pick up his mat and walk. What a surprise this must have been! The waters didn't heal him, Jesus did. His healing was miraculous, instantaneous, and complete (v. 9). Strangely enough, it was also controversial! In verse 10, the third players in the drama showed up by the pool. There was the cripple; there was the Christ; and then there were the critics. Overlooking the miracle of this man's healing, the legalistic religious leaders condemned the man for "working" on the Sabbath by carry his rolled-up mat (see Jer. 17:21). The healed man made no excuse. He simply stated the facts: the One with the power to heal was owed his obedience (v. 11). For reflection: *Read verses 12-18 to see how the controversy unfolded. Compare and contrast the actions of the Jewish leaders, the healed man, and the Lord. What similarities can you find in today's society?*

**Unlimited delight (vv. 19-21).** Jesus never backed down when confronted by the religious establishment. Their big issue was Jesus' claim to deity (v. 18). Notice that Jesus explained Himself clearly and succinctly: His authority came from God the Father (v. 19); His actions were in accordance with those of the Father (v. 19); His miracles were approved by the Father (v. 20);

and His greatest miracle—His coming resurrection—would prove His equality with the Father (v. 21). The Savior’s delight comes from doing His Father’s work, amazing the skeptics, and giving life to those who are dead (see Eph. 2:1). For reflection: *Look at the end of verse 21. Jesus said, “...so the Son also gives life to anyone He wants to.” Who is the “He” Christ is referring to, the Father or the Son? Why do you think that? What does that say about your own salvation story?*