Ready for a Miracle

What It Means to Come Expecting · John 5:2-9

Read it. Talk about it. Live it.

Based on the Sermon at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:2-3)

Overview

This sermon draws from John 5, the account of the man healed at the Pool of Bethesda, and connects it to the unchanging nature of God and His miracle-working power. The central challenge is this: stop simply attending church and start arriving with genuine expectation that God will move.

Key Takeaways

- God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His healing and restoring power did not expire with the New Testament era.
- Relief only comes after struggle. Pain and difficulty are not signs that God has abandoned you -- they are often the very conditions that position you to receive His grace.
- No person, pastor, or program can manufacture a miracle. Genuine transformation requires personal readiness and faith.
- The man at Bethesda waited 38 years, and Jesus still found him. God does not discard people when they fail or fall behind.
- Receiving from God requires active expectation, not passive attendance.

Discussion Questions

OPENING (GETTING COMFORTABLE)

1. When you think about attending church, what do you typically expect to happen? Be honest. Has that expectation changed over time?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where relief only came after a prolonged period of difficulty? What did that season teach you?

GOING DEEPER (ENGAGING THE TEXT)

1. Read John 5:2-9. The man at the pool had been in his condition for 38 years. What stands out to you about his situation? What emotions do you think he carried after that many years of waiting?
2. The sermon points out that other people regularly stepped ahead of this man to get their own healing. How does it feel to watch others receive what you have been waiting for? How do you guard your heart in those moments?
3. Numbers 23:19 reminds us that God does not lie or change His mind the way people do. In practical terms, what does it mean to trust that truth when your circumstances seem to say otherwise?
4. The pastor described arriving at the Pool of Bethesda with a broken toe, determined to keep walking regardless. He said, "I am going to walk this until my toe falls plum off because I don't even care." What does that kind of stubborn, forward-moving faith look like in your own life right now?
5. Hebrews 13:8 declares that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do you live as though you genuinely believe that? Where is the gap between what you say you believe and how you actually approach God?

GETTING PERSONAL (APPLICATION AND REFLECTION)

1. The sermon draws a distinction between coming to church and coming expecting something. What would it look like for you personally to shift from one posture to the other?
2. The pastor said that sometimes receiving a miracle also requires a lifestyle change -- that God's healing and our own responsibility are not always separate things. Is there an area of your life where you have been waiting on God to move, but you may also need to make a change on your end?
3. The man at Bethesda had no one to carry him to the water. Is there someone in your life -- a family member, a friend, a coworker -- who is waiting and struggling and has no one to help them get to a place of healing? What is one specific thing your group could do for that person?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One:

- Set aside time before your next church service to pray specifically about what you are expecting God to do. Write it down. Come with intention.
- Identify one area of emotional, physical, or spiritual pain that you have been carrying silently. Share it with at least one trusted person in your group and allow them to pray with you.
- Read through the four Gospels and make a personal list of miracles Jesus performed. Reflect on what each one reveals about His character and what it means that He has not changed.
- Memorize Hebrews 13:8 and recite it each morning this week, particularly on days when your circumstances feel like evidence that God has moved on without you.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying specifically and out loud for one another. Do not default to vague or general prayers. Ask each person to name one thing they are trusting God for, and then pray over each need by name. Remind the group that faith is not passive -- it shows up, it names what it needs, and it expects God to be who He says He is.

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