



74<sup>th</sup> Year

May 3, 2026

Pamphlet #18 (3805)

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**THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (John 5:1-15)**  
**The healing of the paralytic**

*At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water; whoever stepped in first after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked. Now that day was the sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet, and walk.' "They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, 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 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.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 befall you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.*

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## **THE HEALING OF THE HUMAN WILL**

The Gospel passage that is read in today's Divine Liturgy describes the healing of a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, near the Sheep Gate, through which the sheep destined for sacrifice in the Temple of Jerusalem passed. The word "Bethesda" could be rendered as "house of mercy, of compassion." In other words, it was a sacred place, a holy shrine, as we say in our Orthodox tradition, where, in a miraculous manner, the sick were healed.

The paralytic of the passage had been bedridden for a full thirty-eight years, alone and helpless. The Lord approached him and asked him a seemingly superfluous question: "Do you want to be made well?" This question is addressed primarily to the will, the desire, the free choice of the person who suffers from the illness of sin. For sin is not simply the violation of a commandment, of a moral code, but rather a failure, a wrong choice, a missing of the mark, the inability to love God with all our heart and our fellow man as ourselves.

Therefore, when a person makes bad use of his will and freedom, he selfishly deploys the powers of his soul, the gifts of the Creator, against himself and against his neighbor. The results of this attitude, which reveals folly, immaturity, and ignorance of Gospel teaching, clearly demonstrate the truth of this claim, since for the most part, we see everywhere, the tendency toward self-destruction of man and the feelings of savagery and aggressiveness that they externalize toward their social environment: confrontations, quarrels, physical violence, murders, wars, domination, the prevalence of evil, exploitation, injustice, and the banishment of love and peace, are common phenomena of a bleak reality.

### **The core of sin**

The origin of evil and the center of sin are found in man's departure from God. Saint Maximus the Confessor said that when the nous (mind) of man apostatizes from God, it becomes either

demonic or beast like. This alienation is the cause of human misery, failure, and sin on every level: from the wretched quality of interpersonal relationships and the accompanying feelings of pain and guilt, to the emptiness of inner loneliness and the experience of an unlivable life, without meaning, without truth, without love, without Christ.

### **Man's trust in God**

For this reason, the Lord does not limit Himself to healing man from physical illnesses alone, but first and foremost He looks to the healing of the soul, to the cure of the passions that dwell in the heart. However, in order for this to be achieved, man's trust in God is necessary, as well as his cooperation in the work of his healing. Thus, when Christ asks the paralytic, "Do you want to be made well?" it is as if He were asking him, "Do you believe that I am able to heal your soul and your body?" The weary and burdened gaze of the paralytic was fixed upon the deep, serene, and light bearing gaze of Jesus. He believed in Him and obeyed the paradoxical command that He gave him: "Rise, take up your bed, and walk." And the miracle took place!

### **The life-giving word of Christ**

Through faith, trust, love, and obedience to Christ, the paralytic was freed from sin and from bodily illness. He was completely renewed; he was reborn in Christ. For the commandments of Christ – His word – operate in a redeeming, healing, sanctifying, and saving manner, since, as the word of God, they are light, life, and truth. Within the commandments of Christ, the very Son and Word of God Himself is hidden, who is revealed to the person who struggles to live according to them, because the natural functioning of our being lies in our personal communion with God, His Word and His Spirit.

May 3, 2026: FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA

Commemoration of the Healing of the Paralytic.

Timothy and Maura, Martyrs († 283);

Peter, Archbishop of Argos († 950); Oecumenius, Bishop of Tricca;  
Theophanes of Peritheorion (14th c.); Xenia, Virgin Martyr.

3rd Tone – Eothinon: 5 – Epistle: Acts 9:32-42

– Gospel: John 5:1-15

NEXT SUNDAY: May 10, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Epistle: Acts 11:19-30 – Gospel: John 4:5-42

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