



My Beloved Ones,

***ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!***

*Christ is Risen!*

In this Sunday's Gospel we hear of a miraculous pool in the city of Jerusalem, called Bethesda, where an angel was known to trouble the waters, so that those who suffered from illnesses or had disabilities could lay in the pool to hope for God's grace and mercy. And so, it is in this place that our Lord meets a lonely paralytic.

Jesus asks the man if he wishes to be healed, because he knows that this man has been paralyzed for thirty-eight years, and that he has waited by the water for a long time. Instead of responding with his heart's desire, we see how troubled his soul is, because he says, *"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." (John 5:6-8)

The authorities are so shocked by this man's breaking the Sabbath, they fail to notice the miracle the Lawgiver Himself has performed. Even the man on whom this blessing is bestowed fails to appreciate what Christ has done for him. Our Lord warns him, *"See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you"*, but still the man points Christ to the authorities (John 5:14-15). The Evangelist meant for this miracle to illustrate Christ honoring the Spirit of the Law—where the elders see only the Letter. Today, however, I wish to concentrate on the man's statement: *"Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled..."* I believe that it illustrates an important point about loneliness.

This man was not simply looking to be healed, he wished to be *seen*. Christ approached the Paralytic to demonstrate how we are to treat others. Our Lord knew him, because He knows all His Creation, but as human beings and as neighbors, they were strangers to each other. Yet still, our Lord helped him. Perhaps the greatest lessons we can take from this Gospel is that we must do our best to demonstrate kindness and love—especially because these virtues help us to achieve Christ's warning to be careful to *"Sin no more"*. We are not simply called to give our possessions or our treasures to those less fortunate, but our time as well. Therefore, let us remember the Paralytic and offer our hearts as well, so that our fellow human beings can say instead, *"I have someone..."*

**+ALEXIOS**

Metropolitan of Atlanta