

**Dr. Ron Armstrong • March 20, 2022**

**Come and See: Just Another Pharisee?**

John 5:1 Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup> Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

<sup>7</sup> “Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” <sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, <sup>10</sup> and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

<sup>11</sup> But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

<sup>12</sup> So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

<sup>15</sup> The man ... told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

<sup>16</sup> So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. <sup>17</sup> In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” <sup>18</sup> For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

**A. Actual and accidental Pharisees.**

1. In chapter 5, it becomes clear that the Pharisees are going to oppose Jesus and will be the most prominent enemies of Jesus.
2. They were both highly religious and a highly political group.
3. They had a reputation for trying to be spiritual by strictly following a list of rules (Legalism).
4. A lot of the Pharisees passionately loved God (many followed Jesus), but passionate faith can have a dark side (Crusades, Inquisition).
5. No one plans on being a Christian who judges, condemns, or compares themselves with others. No one intends to join “JFJ.”
6. We start to become “accidental Pharisees” in lots of ways. Sometimes it's a sudden event, or a new influence, or even life-long indoctrination.
7. We judge the commitment, purity, or positions of others. When they don't measure up to us, arrogance starts to corrupt our heart.
8. Right, but wrong. Accidental Pharisees are dangerous because we can be right about part of the Scripture, but wrong about the “totality” of Scripture. For example:

Defend  
the  
Faith

Be humble and gentle  
Obey authority if you can  
Live in peace with all men  
Avoid foolish controversies

**B. Let's not forget the most important part of the story.**

1. After 38 years, this guy's life was changed.
2. How long should we keep praying for something we desperately want?
  - a. Until we no longer desperately want it.
  - b. Until God says “no” or the door closes.
  - c. Until God gives it to me.