

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST John 5-1-9

Int: Every day he dragged himself over the rough cobblestones to Bethesda where he joined a crowd of cripples hoping to get in the pool to be healed. On this day the shadow of a tall Stranger fell across his mat. “Do you want to get well?” the Stranger asked. “I have no one to put me in the pool,” the cripple replied. But Jesus did something better. “Get up, pick up your mat and walk!” And so the man did.

Sometimes I have wished I could paint a portrait of Jesus. But I have far more skill with words than with brushes and colors. So let me use the craft I know best to create a portrait of Christ using this story. I would show Jesus as the

CARING CHRIST

Apparently the lame man was not only helpless but also friendless. In nearly forty years no one in Jerusalem offered to help him or cared whether he lived or died. But Jesus picked this poor paralytic out of that mountain of misery around the pool. And he made his way to his side. For the first time in his life the lame man knew what it was to be loved. No one else cared but Jesus cared. He is the caring Christ!

Anybody around who is hard and bitter because he has not found the love he longs for? I have good news. Look up brother! Jesus loves you.

Do you know Christ’s love?

COMMANDING CHRIST

The Lord’s eyes flashed. His voice rang with authority. “Get up. Pick up your mat. Walk!” He spoke as if he expected the man to obey. He did! Jesus is the commanding Christ.

Some who call themselves Christians do not seem to understand that the word of the commander is law! When the Lord gives an order he expects everyone under his authority to obey without quibbling or hesitation. There is no room for discussion, feasibility studies or democratic votes.

Do you obey Christ’s commands?

CONQUERING CHRIST

To Christ’s command the lame man might have replied, “I would if I could but I cannot!” He could not...but he did! Christ conquered his problem. He stood. To his shoulder he lifted his mat. That emblem of his weakness became the symbol of Christ’s strength as he strode confidently down the streets to his home.

Jesus never commanded anyone to do anything they could not do with his help! What he commands, he empowers. What he orders, he enables.

Do you trust Christ to conquer your obstacles?