

## Greater Reality / Miracles 4

*Before we get started – I want to update you on the inner city initiative we have spoken of. 1) A lot of work has happened, but there is more – update this week on line. (Planning Center). 2) We are close to partnering with 2 inner-city churches that are about holistically affecting the neighborhoods around them. The partnership will focus on helping them plant other inner-city churches that will holistically affect the neighborhoods around them. 3) Finally, 1 of our potential partners: Mike Byrd Faith Comm BC will be here with us on the 21<sup>st</sup> preaching on Jesus' miracle of walking on the water. Can't tell you how excited I am. I would like to pray for Mike & Todd Gentemen (Apostles), the other partner*

Lord, we pray for FCBC & Apostles this morning. Help us all see the greater picture this morning that you are at work in all of this city - in neighborhoods and homes many of us will never enter. Help us see how great your work is and how great your kingdom is & most of all how great you are Lord! Father, we ask for your church throughout St Louis – we beg for unity, for love, and for a shared vision for the greatness of your work – in Jesus name, amen!

*Amazing how hard it is to see the big picture sometime! 1) Sometimes, 5 year olds throw a fit if they don't get to stay up – not knowing they would miss out on so much fun in the morning if they stayed up. 2) Sometimes in our first love – we feel like the world is ending when someone breaks up with us. We can't see there is probably a greater love that will come in a person or Jesus that make this a sweet but small memory. Hard to see this big picture – if it is us or another care about. 3) Sometimes – its only much later do we see the good in a job that ended or a rejection that our kid received. The pain or disappointment blinds. Miracles are one of the most powerful things God uses to help us see past our present reality. And, not just so we can see good come from it. But even grander – so we can see the greatness of God's work in all things. In all miracles, God is doing this. But in this specific miracle God is helping us see something greater thru phys healing.*

**When Jesus reverses the brokenness of our body -**

**God invites us to see a greater reality. 5:00**

01. How does God view of us – who are physically in great need? 02. What is this “greater reality” God is inviting us to see?

### 01. How does God view of us – who are physically in great need?

John 5:1-17 (ESV) 1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. 3 In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. *(Start taking the trash out of the bags.)*

- This “Sheep Gate” was part of the old wall of Jerusalem just a short distance from the temple and it was used to literally bring in all the sheep that were sacrificed in the Temple. *So this was considered an “unclean” area – which meant the priests and anyone coming to worship never went through this gate – or this area.*
- There was another reason this place was avoided by many people. This was a place where a “multitude” of disabled people were gathered and many of them were also considered unclean. *Why were they gathered here?* Just inside this gate was a pool called **Bethesda** (“house of mercy”) that many thought had special healing powers. The legend was the first into the pool when it stirred or bubbled would be healed for that was an angel stirring the waters.
- One last thing - not sure which of the 7 annual **feasts** was going on – but the city was packed. *Which meant thousands of people had brought more disabled friends or family. The scene at this pool would have been crazy.*

5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” 7 The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” There was amongst this great crowd of probably hundreds of diseased and disabled people – one man whom Jesus picked out to talk to. And He asks him, a strange but honest question – **“Do you want to be healed?”**

**What is this man's condition?** *We know he had been paralyzed for 38 yrs – but what else is going on in this man?*

- **He is hopeless.** *His only hope in his mind is this pool and he is so close ... but so far. (pour out more trash)*
- **He is alone.** *He has no one to help him into the pool so probably army crawling - he never makes it in time.*
- **He has gone unnoticed for many years.** *Disabled for 38 years – listen to his words again, “Sir, I have no one”*

**Jesus knew all this**, and he knew this man was **hopeless, alone, and unnoticed for years.**

This man didn't think God could affect his brokenness. In his world, his reality – **He was like trash.** *(Finish)*

*Some people feel hopeless, alone, and unnoticed because of their physical condition. They may be young but with a disease or disability or they may be old & age that has wrecked a body and the feel useless. Result = disc. trash.*

**Do you know someone like this?** How do you talk to them, relate to them, - give them hope, real hope.

**Is this you?** *Do you feel like your physical condition – has rendered you useless and hopeless.* **10:00**

## **Why did Jesus notice this man - and pick this one man alone to talk to - and offer healing?**

- He wasn't move by pity because He saw this man as trash. **God does not see people as trash.**

- Did Jesus notice this man because He saw ... **Treasure?** (Find the geod.)

Did Jesus see something good in this man? In other words, did Jesus look through this whole crowd and find the best man, with the most potential. **Did Jesus see this man like a geode?** Geologists call geodes the Tootsie Roll Pops of the rock world bc underneath the hard exterior lies a surprise center! Geology humor. You have seen these: **not so pretty, even ugly on the outside, but in the center, they are full of beautiful crystals.** Did Jesus see a hidden treasure?

To answer this question, let's go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this story.

**8** Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." **9** And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. **Amazing!** Can we just pause and say amazing. 2 words – get up – and he does! Amazing.

Now back to the question – did Jesus heal this man because he saw him as a treasure – deserving of healing?

**9** Now that day was the Sabbath. **10** So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." **16** And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. **Jesus healed on the Sabbath and told the man to carry his bed. He could have told him – get up and walk. But he added – take up your bed. Why?**

God's Law written by God said keep the Sabbath holy. Don't work – rest in me and my work, not yours. But the Jews added to God's law – things like what was work, healing, carrying beds – were work. The point of God's law was: Rest in my work. You are broken and need my work to reverse your brokenness. When they added to God's law they changed the intent of the law. They made the law – if we keep all of these laws we can be good enough for God. **We are treasures** – and if we keep the law, we prove we are treasures. **If we don't we prove we are trash.**

**Some people in this world believe some people – maybe even all people – are treasures like a geode.**

*They may look rough on the outside, but they just need a little help, someone to believe and notice them and then good things will happen in and through this person. There is no real brokenness to reverse only good to set free.*

Listen to Jesus at the end of this story. **14** Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! **Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."**

This man was not chosen because he was good or had potential. *Jesus is saying – He was a sinner and he even admonishes him to stop in his old ways of continual rebellion toward God. (An aside: Jesus is not saying – our diseases or disabilities are punishment for our sin. In **John 9:1-3**, Jesus dispels this cultural belief – that disease or disability was a punishment for sin. His own disciples asked – why is this man blind – his sin or his parents.*

**Hear JESUS - "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."**

**Your suffering or condition is not punishment. And God doesn't see us in our physical need as trash that he has pity on or a treasures that needs a little nudge.**

What is God's view of us – in our physical need?

**Jesus doesn't see us as trash or treasure.**

**He sees us as BROKEN - in need of God's redeeming work.**

**(Find the broken horse. We are not trash or treasure – but we are broken and need God and his work.)**

But Jesus was not just about healing – when he saw physical brokenness. If he was – then he would have healed everyone that day. There was and still is something greater Jesus is about when it comes to physical healing. **16**

**Story in shower – Cade's chin is split open. Later than night – talking with Will. God protected your brother – could have been worse and the stitches he was amazing. So – what do we pray? "Lord, help me be more gentle with my brother – he really breaks easy." Sometimes – we just miss the point don't we? Jesus heals 10 lepers – one returns. Jesus, what just happened? Why did only one return? God longed for all ten to see something only one did. What was that?**

**02. What is this "greater reality" God is inviting us to see?**

**15** The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. **16** And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. **17** But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

\* If this was just about healing, restoring physical brokenness, Jesus would have healed them all.

\* His redeeming work in all the world is what he invites us to see.

**When Jesus reverses the brokenness of our body -  
God invites us to see a greater reality - His Grand Redemption Work. 20**

What is this grand redemption work that is the “greater reality” God is inviting us to see?

- **Physical brokenness helps us see a broken world in need of God’s restoring work.**

**John 5:17 (ESV)** But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

- **Our broken physical condition screams – this is not the way things were meant to be.** Disease, disabilities, constant debilitating pain. Everything about our physical disease, suffering says – this is wrong.
- **But even more** – when God begins to engage us in our broken physical condition – he points us to another part of this greater reality.

- **When Jesus reverses our physical brokenness we see, “Our soul needs to be restored as well.”**

- **When you see trash** as you view yourself or others in their brokenness you will only see physical healing as way to not be trash. If God doesn’t heal – he is not God or he doesn’t care. Your eyes will not see the greater reality of God’s Restoration Work that shows he cares not just for your body but your soul – now and forever. **Ultimately - you will see things through hopeless eyes. Oh, please see Jesus’ mercy as he heals and allow him to open your eyes to the greater reality of your brokenness in body and soul that needs Jesus.**

- **When you see yourself or others as treasure** – you won’t need Jesus. Miracles are not needed and you will always be cynical – even in front of great proof that God intervened. *(We have two great stories of healing in our own church family that you will hear and see on video in the next weeks. Will they move you to see our souls, your soul needs restoration – or will you dismiss them.)* Treasure = You will not need God to rescue you from your sin and judgment and you will not need God to restore your broken soul bc you don’t think you are broken. *Look at your relationships – your ability to follow God – your care for others – your body or others bodies who are greatly broken. Can you not see that you are broken?*

- **When you see brokenness in yourself and others** - his healing will open your eyes to see **all our souls needs healing too and Jesus can do this – and he still does this!**

- \* **You will look on others who you don’t understand or who are different – with compassion.**

You will see their hopelessness and be move as Jesus was. You will see when they feel alone. God will give you the ability to notice and care and bring the greater reality of Jesus work in this world to another.

- \* **You will see – OUR greatest need, all our greatest need - is the rescue and restoration of our soul.**

- **We need a rescuer (for our sin) and restorer (to make things how they were meant to be).**

*Jesus wandered into the middle of this world that full of broken people. We some call treasure – Jesus calls broken and in need of redemption work. What many call trash – Jesus call broken and in need of redemption work. Jesus, God, left heaven and came and lived among us – and did not see trash or have pity. But the love of the CREATOR who made you , the compassion of the CREATOR said this is not how it was meant to be. So instead of punishing you and I for breaking this world – Instead He punished Jesus. He broke Jesus.*

*The mercy of God was great. In breaking Jesus, He rescues us from our sin (putting all our shame, guilt, and punishment on Jesus.) But he doesn’t say – forgiven, sorry you’re are a little broken – forever. No – His broke Jesus so He could also offer us restoration. This is the greater reality God is about in Christ. He is rescuing and restoring (Redemption Work) **John 5:17 (ESV) ... I am working.** And ...*

- **When Jesus reverses our physical brokenness we see, “This is how it was meant to be & will be.”**

- A picture - *One Day when Jesus returns your body, your soul – even creation will be as it is meant to be.*
- **Healing is Jesus coming to say – you were not meant to be alone, unnoticed, hopeless.** You were meant to be with me – whole in body and soul.
- Remember: **Healing now** is temporary. *For again brokenness will come for your body – until Jesus returns.*
- When Jesus doesn’t heal His followers now – *He is not saying no to healing. He is saying no to temporary healing and bringing us to Him for full and forever healing or restoration of our body.*

*Pic child & wheel chair. This is what he is giving us when he says no to healing here. He is giving the one who has been bound mercy to know forever and full restoration. / Many have been healed while on this earth in our church family. Next weeks – 2 stories will be told. But, death has also visited our church family a lot over the past months and years. Keira, is the most recent and her passing painfully reminds us – this is not how things were meant to be. God didn’t create a broken world – we in our sin broke it. All of us. But thru Jesus’ life, death, & rez – we will taste perfect mercy and receive fully and forever restored bodies (yeah!) and souls (yeah). Keira has tasted perfect mercy as she received a new body and soul fully and forever restored. What a God! What mercy!*

When Jesus reverses the brokenness of our body -  
God invites us to see a greater reality - *His Grand Redemption Work.* 37

BLESSING – Eph 1:16-18 (ESV)