

“Jesus With Us: Jesus With The Disabled” | Rev Tim Frickenschmidt | August 16, 2020

Old Testament Reading [Gen 1:1-3](#)

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Epistle [Rom 6:1-4](#)

⁶ ¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Gospel Reading [John 5:1-18](#)

⁵ 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. (see [Foot-note](#)) 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.” 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. 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.” ¹¹ But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” ¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’” ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. 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.” 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.”

¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Footnote:
waiting for the moving of the water; ⁴ for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.

Introduction

We’re starting a sermon series: Jesus with Us. This morning we find Jesus with the disabled, needing to be baptized. What waters are we lying beside, waiting to get into them? So, two questions: (1) the alternative waters and (2) the controversial rest.

Background

1. The alternative waters

- a. Covid-19 makes it easy to identify with the invalid in John 5:5. Right now, we are “not strong,” not able to go about our normal lives. We are feeling a mental, emotional fatigue, knowing we’re not strong enough. Like the invalid, we’re waiting. Then/now, Jesus was/is walking among the disabled looking for someone to heal.
- b. Those waiting at Bethesda were desperate, long-suffering people who believed John 5:4 and Jesus could tell that the invalid had been waiting a long time.
- c. In [The World’s Worst Neighbor](#) by [Brant Hansen](#), Brant relates his experience in assisting his neighbor, Jarrod, deal with the tragedy of losing his wife and child. Jarrod knew what it was like to be an invalid, not to be strong; Brant also knew what it was like to be an invalid, not ready to deal with this situation.
- d. In John 5:3, multitudes are desperate to get something they don’t have. We all have “healing pools” to which we go, believing if we get in those waters we’ll be okay: Barton Springs, AustinCC, ACL, DKR – angst-filled places with persons competing for something they don’t have (good times; admiration, wealth): our work environments; our kids’ schools/athletics; the bar/club/gym; concerts. In what waters do we long to be ... think of them like a baptism (washing away, renewing). But do they, can they really do that? Can they give us life? Truly, fully, forever?

2. The controversial rest

- a. Jesus asked the invalid “Do you want to be healed?” Instead of answering Yes or No, he gives an excuse by saying Sir, I don’t have. He may evade Jesus’ question because he may want to remain the way he is: maybe he’s used to his broken life; or maybe his disability has become his identity.
 - 1) On a spiritual level, at some point, not wanting to be healed is all of us: parts of our lives are as broken as the invalid’s legs, but we’re not willing to embrace the risk or make the effort that getting healed would require.
 - 2) The invalid may not want healing on Jesus’ terms. Instead of accepting Jesus’ offer by saying Yes, I want to be healed, he seems to decline Jesus’ offer and suggests an alternative: I’ll let you carry me to the waters (where I can be healed). Some believe that’s what Christianity is: Jesus is the means to get something else that will heal and set our lives right. This can be all of us at some point, trying to co-opt Jesus into helping us gain salvation from somewhere else. (E.g., want to be carried into the waters of marriage, success, children, health).
- b. The amazing Grace of this passage is that Jesus gives the invalid what he doesn’t want: He heals him without putting him into the waters by which he’s laid so long and controversy ensues. In vv8-9 Jesus tells the man to take up his bed and walk, which would violate the [Mishnah](#) (rabbinical laws of the time). In v14, Jesus tells the man to give thanks, amend your life and follow Me. But in v15 the man walks away from Jesus and betrays Him to the religious leaders, who persecute Him for (1) working on the Sabbath and (2) asserting He was God making all things new.
- c. Just as God rested, satisfied, on the seventh day ([Gen 2:2](#)), Jesus offered the man (former invalid) to share in the rest He enjoyed as God – by just giving thanks. It’s only by God being with us that we can set our lives right and receive rest.
- d. It made sense to Jarrod that Brant came to him when he learned Brant was Christian. Brant went to Jarrod because he was following and was at rest with Jesus; Jesus goes to people like Jarrod; Brant could go to Jarrod because he was going with and for Jesus, who went to the cross for us. Brant knew Jarrod was desperate for the good news that Jesus was raised up and death didn’t have the last word.

Discuss

1. 1a How are we like the invalid at Bethesda; how are we not strong, right now?
2. 1d Alternative waters (angst-filled places where we compete for what we don’t have).
3. 2a1 we’re not willing to embrace the risk that getting healed would require.
4. 2a2 Some believe Jesus is only the means to get something else that will heal.
5. 2b Jesus gives the invalid what he doesn’t want, offers him rest, creates controversy.

Conclusion/Application

•Don’t walk away from Jesus when He offers us His rest. Follow Him wherever He leads; maybe He’ll take us to a man/woman like Jarrod. •Don’t blame Him when we get into other waters we’ve been laying beside. He comes to us when we lie beside other waters and asks us Do you want to be healed by Me. •The hope of this passage is that God loves those who don’t love Him and He will heal everyone if they/we come to Him.