

Our passage this morning is from John 5, 1 through 18.

John 5, 1 through 18.

After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, an Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.

In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, and paralyzed.

One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

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?

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'm going, another steps down before me.

Jesus said to him, get up, take up your bed and walk.

And at once the man was healed and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath.

So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, Is it the Sabbath, and is it not lawful for you to take up your bed?

But he answered them, The man who healed me, that man said to me, Take up your bed and walk.

They asked him, Who is the man who said to you, Take up your bed and walk?

Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.

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.

The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him, and this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

But Jesus answered them, My father is working until now, and I am working.

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.

One of those days.

Stuff's just falling out all over the place.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you that we can come before you not on the basis of our own performance and our own merit and works, but Lord, that we come based on the merit and the work of Jesus our Messiah.

And Lord, we're thankful that in our ups and downs,

we can experience the steadfast love of Christ even in new and fresh ways this morning as we gather together as your people and lift your name high and sit under the preaching of your word.

So Lord, again, we ask that you would come and do what only you can do.

and that you would renew our hearts, that you would turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh sensitive to your glory and your beauty and to what you would have us do and how you would have us love one another today.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Sounds like I'm a little hot, Dan.

Thanks.

Have you ever had to give somebody advice that they didn't want to hear or correct somebody?

or confront them even about something offensive that they were kind of in the habit of saying or that they were in the habit of doing.

It's not easy, right?

Having to have those tough conversations with people.

I mean, not only do you have to have the wisdom

to give them good advice, right?

Or to confront them about what they really need to be confronted about and not just like a fringe symptom of like the root issue.

But you also have to have wisdom to know how to say it or how to ask it in such a way that they'll see and accept the truth, right?

Speaking the truth in love isn't just being blunt and dropping truth bombs on people and then walking away and say, I did my piece, right?

Like it's,

It's thoughtfully and prayerfully considering how can I present this to this person in a way that it will actually be received and heard where they'll see the truth.

And not just see the truth, right, but to see the truth in a way that's desirable, in a way that they want to change, where they want to react in response to seeing the truth.

Being a good friend, a good parent, a good spouse, like giving advice, it's really like heart surgery.

It's difficult, right?

It's having skill to go in and help people see their own hearts and desire for their hearts to change.

It's difficult.

Jesus is the master heart surgeon, and we see him doing heart surgery.

all throughout the gospels.

He's constantly doing it when he's preaching, when he's healing, when he's talking to the disciples.

And he's doing it on a number of different levels with a number of different people.

That's why it's important to pay attention, I think, when we come to these miracles and these works that Jesus does, to seeing not just Jesus, who we will see today, and not just the miracle that he does, but also the person that he's healing, the type of person

What's going on with the person that he's healing, that he's interacting with?

Because you and I probably have at least a little bit of that person in ourselves, right?

In our own hearts, in our own minds.

Today, we're going to see Jesus confront a grumpy, superstitious, sinful, paralytic who's not too different than you and me.

And as we watch them interact today, the two of them, we'll see that when we humbly trust Jesus with our deepest needs and desires, he gives us more.

It's more complicated than that.

But that's what we need to walk away with, all right?

So we'll see kind of how and what that looks like.

But the big idea and the big impression that we need to walk away with about Jesus is that when we entrust him with ourselves, in particular, our deepest needs and desires, he gives us far more than what we ask for or what we want.

I just want to look at the paralytic today.

I want to look at what Jesus does to the paralytic and also who Jesus is to the paralytic or who Jesus reveals himself to be by what he does to the paralytic.

We're actually going to preach two sermons on this passage.

Today, we're just going to look at the paralytic and Jesus and their interaction.

Next week, we'll look at how Jesus interacts with the Pharisees.

and look at the Pharisees in particular, but then also what Jesus does and says to them.

There's actually, the outline's not going to change.

So the main points of the outline are the same points, just plug in the Pharisees instead of the paralytic, and I think we'll see something dramatically different as well.

That's enough about that.

Next week, though, we're talking about this week, and we're going to look at the paralytic.

So first off, who is this guy?

We're given quite a few clues in the text about who he is and given a little insight into his character and what's going on in his heart and his mind.

Let me just read verses 1 to 5 and verse 7 again.

After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool in Aramaic called Bethesda or Bethsaida.

you can kind of plug either or in there, which has five roofed colonnades.

In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, and paralyzed.

One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to them, do you want to be healed?

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.

All right, a couple of things we see.

One,

First and foremost, let's write on the surface, is that this is a man who is known to be helplessly in need.

He's known to be helplessly in need, or a man known to be in helpless need.

He's unable to move himself into the pool for 38 years.

He sat there, laid there by the pool for 38 years,
unable to get himself into the pool.

And each day of those 38 years is another reminder that he's helpless to save himself, right?

He's helpless to get himself into the pool and be healed.

I mean, if 38 years has taught him anything, they've taught him that he needs someone else, right?

He needs someone else to get him into the pool because he can't make it on his own, which verse seven makes clear.

And all this time has kind of proven him to be, I'm not saying it necessarily made him this way, but at least has proven him to be fairly superstitious and grumpy.

The Pool of Bethesda was one of a pair of spring-fed pools that would occasionally ripple from the pressure of the spring.

So spring underneath would build up some pressure and cause it to ripple.

Some of your translations may include a verse four that says that the angel of the Lord was throwing the water and that the first person in got healed.

That is pretty clearly a later edition.

It is not in the earliest manuscripts.

So the way we figure out what the actual text of the scriptures is, because as the scriptures got passed along, things were added or subtracted from it, is we do this thing called textual criticism.

where we take all the manuscripts, we look at the oldest, we weight them by location, how close they were to where we know that the author wrote the text, and also how old they are.

And we combine them all together and compare them to one another, kind of criticize one by the others.

And that's how we get to the original text.

We don't have any of the original manuscripts that like John or Paul actually wrote.

What we do have though, is an obscene amount of copies, right?

And early copies, way, way more.

This is not in the notes, so I should not be going off on this rabbit trail.

but you're getting it for free this morning.

We have way more copies of the New Testament scriptures, both fragments and complete copies, which is amazing, than any other historical document that we have.

There's no question that we know down to about 99.9% of what the original manuscript actually said, and the minor ones or the minor discrepancies don't affect any of the major doctrines in the text.

We can do a whole other class on that sometime.

If you want more information, I can give you books and articles and stuff to read.

Anyways, all I have to say, verse four was an addition, probably somebody trying to clarify what was going on to a group that came later that didn't understand.

But I don't think that the pool, personally, I don't think that the pool had any healing properties for a number of reasons.

One, verse four is a later addition.

was not inspired by the Holy Spirit written by John.

Two, that verse four does reflect a belief that we've found through other archeological evidence that predates the New Testament, predates Jesus, that these pools somehow had healing properties because of the weird stirring thing that would happen to it.

Also, Jesus doesn't acknowledge that the pool has healing powers.

The guy's like, can you put me in the pool so I can get healed?

Can you get me in there first?

And that's what he's trying to do.

And Jesus doesn't acknowledge any healing qualities of the pool.

Neither does John, the author who wrote this story.

Also, the circumstances surrounding the pool are fairly fishy.

Like,

Only the first person that gets into the pool gets healed.

Like if someone doesn't get healed, you can just picture this whole crowd clamoring to be the first into the pool.

And anybody who seems to maybe have a reduction of the symptoms, like they obviously were the first one in, everybody else who wasn't healed, you didn't make it in time, sorry, come back tomorrow, right?

The circumstances around it are fairly fishy as well.

All that to say, so that's my opinion, don't believe the pool actually had healing powers.

But even if they did, even if the pool had healing abilities, the scene here is still full of heartbreak and disappointment.

I mean, John says that there's a multitude, right?

A multitude of the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed.

And only one person, when this rippling, this stirring happens, is going to be healed, leaving everybody else disappointed.

So we can understand why our guy here might be a bit grumpy, right?

Why he might be a bit put out.

38 years, hasn't been able to even make it into the pool, right?

Make it into the pool first and possibly be healed if the stories are true.

But grumpy might not be the most precise word for it.

So what exactly do we know about this guy?

Well, first, nobody wants to help him into the pool, which makes you wonder why.

There are people there, there's family, loved ones that are there with their other people, and nobody for 38 years has found the compassion in their heart to help this guy into the pool.

which makes you wonder if he's not a little abrasive and maybe not the most likable character.

Two, we see that as after he's healed and the Pharisees confront him, he's very quick to throw Jesus under the bus to just stay out of trouble with the Pharisees.

They're like, hey, why are you carrying your mat?

He told me to do it, right?

The guy that healed me told me to do it.

Don't give me any trouble.

And not only does he not thank Jesus for healing him, but he doesn't even get his name, right?

He doesn't know who he is.

He's asked later, who healed you?

I don't know.

Like, you'd think if you had any ounce of gratitude or just sense towards other people that you would have thanked the man, somehow got his name so that you could thank him, repay him in some way.

He doesn't do any of that.

And then when he does get Jesus' name, he goes immediately back to the Pharisees and tries to leverage it to get in their good graces.

So at the least, if we're just reading this charitably, at the least, he's fairly selfish and he's not the brightest tool in the shed.

Jesus is there in all of his glory, heals him, and he doesn't even transfer his loyalty to Jesus.

Not only does he miss that he's God in the flesh,

but he doesn't even see that he's somebody worth following or even being friends with, right?

He's quick to throw him under the bus to stay in the good graces of the Pharisees, kind of the leaders in the area.

D.A.

Carson, who's Canadian, refers to him as dull, right?

Just like not the brightest guy, not the sharpest tool in the shed, just not seeing things rightly.

And I think that

This inability to see Jesus for who he is and this dullness, I think we get a clue where this is coming from.

And I think it's because he's a victim in his own eyes.

Jesus asks him if he wants to be healed.

And he immediately, the first thing out of his mouth, is he goes to what other people aren't doing for him.

They're not helping him.

Somebody else is taking his spot in the pool and getting in there before him.

He doesn't take any responsibility, which we find out later that he actually should be taking some responsibility.

We'll get to that in a second.

But he doesn't even respond to Jesus.

Jesus is like, do you want to be healed?

He doesn't even say like, yes, would you please help me in the pool?

I've been looking for a hand for 38 years.

Yes, I want to be healed.

Please put me in the pool.

He doesn't even say that.

What comes out first, what comes out of his mouth first, is how other people have wronged him.

What other people were doing to him.

Their wrongs were bigger in his own eyes.

They're bigger than his own responsibility.

And they're even bigger than God who's standing right there in the flesh right before him.

So who is this guy?

If we put these clues together, we see that we got a man who's in obvious need physically, but who is also in spiritual need as well.

And then entering the scene,

is Jesus from stage right.

And what does Jesus do?

Well, Jesus does a few things, and John kind of stacks up some verbs here to help us see very clearly what Jesus did.

First, John says in verse six that Jesus saw.

Where are we going?

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, Jesus saw.

We already noted that this had to be a heartbreaking scene.

I mean, you can imagine the multitudes of broken humanity

You can imagine hearing the groans of everyone there laying under these little roofs around the pools.

You can smell the stench of that Middle Eastern heat and people just not being able to kind of get out of their own filth around the pool.

In the middle of it all, Jesus saw this particular man, this individual, the one that nobody else saw or at least were choosing to ignore.

And if that's where you're at this morning, please know, please know that Jesus sees.

John's been saying that from the beginning.

In chapter 1, Jesus sees Nathaniel under the fig tree.

In chapter 4, Jesus sees the woman at the well.

Jesus sees the paralytic here next to the pool.

And Jesus sees you.

And not only does he see you, he knows.

Jesus saw and he knew everything.

He knew the man's situation.

John gives us the information that he knew that the man had been there a long time to remind us of Jesus's supernatural knowledge, that he's God, that he knows people intimately.

But he also tells us to show us his compassion.

It seems that one of the things that drew Jesus to this man was that he had been there a long time.

Perhaps he was thinking that

38 years ought to have at least taught this guy of his helplessness and his need.

Maybe he's ready to hear.

Maybe he's ready to receive now.

But to kind of probe and clarify where this guy's head's at, where the paralytic's head's at, Jesus speaks, right?

So he sees, he knows, and he speaks.

And the first thing he speaks to him is a question.

He first asks, do you want to be healed?

Now, I haven't lived that long, but I've learned in my 38 years of life

that there are some just questions, some questions you just don't ask, right?

See a guy broken down on the side of the road and he's underneath the hood.

You don't walk up to him and ask, having engine problems?

Like, you're not gonna get a nice response.

Like, no, I'm just hugging my radiator under here, right?

Like, or something worse.

You just, some questions you don't ask.

Like a woman in labor, you don't ask.

Pretty much anything, right?

I found that with our first.

You just shut up and do what you're told.

And in all of my years of hospital visitation, it hasn't crossed my mind once, right, to ask if the person in the hospital wants to be healed.

Of course they do, right?

Of course they want to be healed.

It's almost offensive to ask them the question, do you want to be healed?

But Jesus asks, right?

He asks this man, and I think he asks with a purpose, right?

Because I think he knows what's going on in this guy's heart.

And I think both of them know, both Jesus and the paralytic know, that healing here would bring responsibilities.

Invalids were able to beg.

They were able to receive charitable handouts.

And especially having a place at the pool where there's lots of.

Other folks there, like people would come to do their charitable thing and give donations.

And because they were unable to work, they weren't expected to work, right?

So there wasn't much expectation.

There weren't responsibilities on these folks.

So Jesus asks, do you want to be healed?

Implying that healing is going to bring a change.

And this change is going to bring expectations and responsibilities.

You can kind of get away, you know?

Can you almost imagine this conversation happening with Jesus?

Like, listen, you can kind of get away with blaming everybody else right now.

But if I restore your ability to walk, it's going to be a lot more clear that you're responsible, right?

You're responsible for the situation in your life.

You're responsible for your actions.

I think this is one of the reasons that Jesus tells him to pick up his bed.

It's an immediate acknowledgement of those expectations and responsibilities that come with being healed.

So unbeliever,

Let me ask you this morning, I believe the text obligates me to ask you this morning, do you want to be healed?

Are the expectations and the responsibilities that come along with following Jesus keeping you from accepting his healing for your soul?

Believers, are there parts of your heart that you know need healing, that you know you need Jesus to touch,

and you're hesitant to embrace him in that area of your heart, his healing touch in that area of your heart because you know what it'll cost, you know what you'll have to give up, you'll know what you'll have to do, what you'll have to embrace, the deceitfulness of sin would have us believe that it's better to willfully remain mutilated and handicapped rather than accept the light burden and the easy yoke of Jesus.

And don't fall for it, right?

It's a lie.

Do you want to be healed?

The man doesn't give a simple yes, right?

He gives, we already looked, he gives us like, well, I can't, nobody's helping me.

He doesn't give a simple yes, but he gives an, he essentially says yes.

He gives an implied yes to which Jesus responds by, after asking the question, he gives the command, right?

Get up, take up your bed and walk.

And as we've seen over and over again in John, and as we'll see as we move through John and some of the other gospels, that when Jesus speaks, right, things change.

Jesus exercises his authority on many levels, right, many levels in the world by speaking.

He speaks and muscles grow, tendons strengthen, nerves reconnect, and the man's healed.

He's healed and then he joyfully responds in obedience.

He takes up his bed and he walks.

But the big question is, is he spiritually healed?

So he gets up and he walks, but was there healing in his soul?

Is there a change in his heart and in his soul?

We're not told.

So that's kind of the mystery of the miracle here.

Was there a change from the inside out?

But it doesn't seem that he quite grasps, even if there was the spark of a change, even if a change like new birth had happened and he's starting to change, it's clear that he doesn't quite grasp who Jesus is or fully appreciate the beauty of Jesus' character.

And we don't want that to be us this morning.

We don't want to miss Jesus in this scene, just like the paralytic missed him.

So let's take a closer look.

Who is Jesus?

as he interacts with the paralytic?

Who is he in this miracle that he does for him?

Look again at verses 13 and 14, because Jesus comes back and follows up with him.

He says, 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.

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.

I think we see a few things about Jesus here.

as he heals and follows up with the paralytic.

One, Jesus is sovereign over illness.

The first thing that was obvious and ought to have been obvious to this man, though he seems to be a little too dull to realize the implications of this, is that Jesus has supernatural power over illness and injury and therefore is no ordinary person.

Jesus spoke a word and this man was healed.

I would also like to note that his healing

was not on the basis of the paralytic's faith.

The paralytic didn't even ask to be healed.

He didn't even clearly state when asked if you wanted to be healed.

He didn't give a clear yes or response to it.

It was kind of implied, and yet Jesus in his sovereignty heals the man for his own glory and his own purposes.

At least one of those purposes was to go beyond the body and to heal or to touch this man's soul, right?

To make an attempt to reach this man's heart.

And in so doing, we see that Jesus is also holy to forgive sin.

He says, go and sin no more that nothing worse may happen to you.

So there are some passages in John and in the gospels where Jesus clearly states that somebody's illness or like a catastrophe that happened, that it wasn't due to any individual sin, that we just live in a sinful world, it's broken, bad stuff happens.

There wasn't A to B correlation between a particular sin

and then a bad thing that happens.

That's not the case here.

Jesus implies that the paralysis is in some way a consequence of the man's sinful choices.

And he encourages him to stop so that nothing worse will happen to him.

So whether that's like a natural consequence of sin, like if you disobey your parents and you run across the street and you get hit by a car, that's a consequence of the disobedience to your parents, right?

And maybe not necessarily a proportionate consequence there, we would say, but it's a natural consequence.

I didn't listen to my parents, they knew better, and I suffered this negative consequence from not obeying them.

Or whether it's a supernatural consequence to our sin, like when Paul warns the Corinthian church

that a number of them are weak and sick and some have died because of the irreverent way that they were handling the Lord's table, right?

That wasn't a natural consequence of taking the bread and wine.

It wasn't bad, right?

It wasn't somehow polluted and making them sick.

God was bringing about these illnesses, allowing these illnesses, bringing them into their lives as a rebuke, right?

For the way that they were handling his table.

We don't know what caused the man's paralysis, but Jesus indicates that it's a direct result or was a direct result of his sinful choices.

Therefore, when Jesus heals the man's paralysis, when he removes the consequence of whatever sinful choices that were made to bring this into the man's life, it's an act of mercy and grace and even forgiveness, right?

It's extended to this man in light of his sin and the consequences of his sin.

That's something only God can offer.

Only God can offer forgiveness for sins.

And Jesus, as God in the flesh, encourages the man to accept this forgiveness and to repent, to go and sin no more, to turn from his sin so that nothing worse would happen to him.

And it's almost certain that that something worse is the final judgment that Jesus had in mind.

There's something worse than paralysis.

There's something worse that you will face as a consequence of your sin than any earthly consequence we could face

And that's the just wrath of God on judgment day.

Which means, since we're talking about Jesus here, that not only should we note that Jesus is sovereign over illness and that he's holy and divine to forgive sins, but what we should see in his interaction with the paralytic here is that he is wise to say what's needed when it's needed.

Look at verse 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.

Remember, the only thing the man could see before, or at least the only thing he says to Jesus, first thing out of his mouth, is how he's been wronged, how he's the victim.

Which isn't totally wrong, right?

Nobody's helped him.

He's feeling like somebody should be helping him, and he's probably right.

But what he needed to see more fundamentally was his own sin.

What he needed to see before he saw his victimhood was his guilt that brought the paralysis in the first place.

So what does Jesus do?

What does Jesus do to help him see?

One, he points out right after healing him, after graciously healing him and forgiving him, he points out,

how much better it is to be well, right?

See your well.

Doesn't this feel good?

I think we can all remember a time when we've been forgiven after and shown grace and mercy after we were expecting severe consequences or maybe even after we experienced severe consequences.

What a great feeling that is.

This guy had to be feeling something like that kind of relief, right?

And Jesus says, look, it's good to be well, right?

You're well.

And then he subtly reminds him that his sin is what disfigured him in the first place, right?

So go and sin no more.

The connection between you are now well and go and sin no more that nothing worse may happen to you is the implication that

that that paralysis was caused by something you did in the first place.

Like you were responsible because of your sin.

So don't do it, right?

That encourages him to go.

See how much better it is to be well?

See how much better it is to be whole?

Go and sin no more.

Encourages him to go back and sin no more because there are worse consequences than just a paralysis.

I mean, see how our Savior loves the unlovely like you and me.

He has this conversation with him even after the guy in ungrateful selfishness throws him under the bus to the Pharisees.

He has this little tough conversation with him and confronts him with his sin even after he's already been ungrateful and selfish to him again.

Jesus didn't just help the man into the pool, right?

The guy is sitting there

And Jesus says, do you want to be well?

And he basically is like, yeah, just get me into the pool, right?

Nobody's put me in the pool.

Everybody goes down before I get in there.

Please, like, you know, just if you want to help, roll me into the pool or whatever.

And Jesus doesn't do that.

The guy's desire, what he was asking for was to be put in the pool and possibly be healed.

And Jesus doesn't give him what he wants.

He doesn't give him what he asks for.

He gives him what he needs.

He heals him.

And he heals him in such a way that it would speak to his heart.

That it would reach to his heart.

Listen, I can say confidently this morning that that's what Jesus, that's what God is doing in your life right now.

He's not out of control.

is not somehow frustrated by diseases or other people's sin against you, right?

He has allowed things that are terrible, that he hates, right?

I'm not saying that God loves sickness, that God loves sin or anything like that.

I'm saying that he has chosen to work in this world by allowing these things for your good to speak into your life and to reach the deeper needs of your heart.

So that something worse won't happen down the road.

Do you want to be healed?

Especially at the heart level.

We accept his forgiveness and go and sin no more.

Those things that he says to the paralytic, he says to us.

My great physician heals the sick.

What's this verse about?

This verse of the song that we're about to sing?

My great physician heals the sick.

The lost he came to save.

The sick in heart and the sick in soul.

For me, his precious blood he shed.

For me, his life he gave.

Do you want to be healed?

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, the only argument and the only plea we have before your righteous throne is the precious blood of Jesus.

And Lord, not only does it make us right with you, but it cleanses us of all our unrighteousness.

It heals us from the inside out.

And Lord, I pray that you would keep us from in stiff neck defiance and pride and selfishness from rejecting your healing this morning, Lord.

Lord, I pray that you would allow these words and more importantly, the person that we see in your son

in this passage today.

Lord, that we would allow him and his beauty and his character to penetrate our hearts and our souls.

And Lord, I pray that you would give us the grace to embrace him, to receive, Lord, and to be changed by his love and his mercy.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.