

Good morning, we are jumping back into a series today called ... Jesus Among Us.

Jesus Among Us ... is an invitation to recognize that Jesus is present in us and with us and desires to reveal Himself to us and through us every day. The church is a people transformed by the presence of Jesus and sent into the world carrying His love, hope, and truth.

It is a life lived with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and revealing Jesus to the people around us. These three points (a life lived with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and revealing Jesus) ... are (in my opinion) what it means to be a follower of Jesus!

In this series, we will look at Jesus 's earthly ministry to see how He showed up to spaces, interacted with people, and brought transformation to situations.

So, as we look at the text, we are looking for Jesus, His nature, how He responds to those around Him. We are also looking for our invitations through the story. How can we respond to those around us and to the Lord?

Before we jump into the text today, I wanted to give some literary context for where we are reading in scripture...the Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (known as The Gospels) tell the story of Jesus' earthly ministry—what He did, said, taught, experienced, and accomplished.

These stories answer questions such as:

- Who is Jesus?
- What is the Kingdom of God like?
- How did Jesus reveal the Father?

So when we read something like: **"Jesus had compassion on them..." (Matthew 9:36)**, the Gospel writer is showing us Jesus in action. The theology is there, but much of it is communicated through story, dialogue, events, signs, and Jesus' teaching. That means as we read the text, our observations of Jesus and others in the text, can be an invitation to us, as it speaks of Jesus' nature and how He interacted with people.

Today we will look at **John 5:1-15** ... to see what we can learn from Jesus in how He lived His daily life during His earthly ministry, and receive several invitations for us as the church.

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, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

Let me pause for one moment, Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem, which at this time, was the center of Jewish worship and religious life. In Jerusalem, there is a pool known for healing named Bethesda. When looking at the meaning of that word, it is understood as "house of mercy." So, this was a place ... where the people encountered God's mercy, in a very specific way, healing through the pool of Bethesda.

³ In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Here we see a specific system of how the people at this time encountered God's mercy ... that being through being the first person to step into the pool of Bethesda, once the water was stirred.

⁵ Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

The phrase, **Jesus saw him** in the original language is defined as "to see, perceive, or notice." And the word **knew** in the phrase **Jesus knew that he already had been *in that condition*** is the word, *ginosko*, meaning "to know, recognize, understand." In addition, the form of this word specifically means "having known." Why do I emphasize each of these words? Because I believe it demonstrates the nature of Jesus ... in that Jesus saw (perceived, noticed) the man, and Jesus knew (having known) the man. This truth of Jesus' nature is constant and eternal. He sees us and He knows us. Jesus is entering a city full of religious activity, yet His attention is drawn to a man who has spent decades

suffering. This simple observation shows how religious activity can surround us ... while people remain in desperate need for an encounter with Jesus. I do not believe this is God's heart for people. Yet, as humans we can focus on systems, ways of how God moved in the past, and miss what He wants to do in the moment.

1. Invitation as the Church – Be careful to not let religious activity keep us from seeing what God wants to do in the moment.

Jesus always SEES and always KNOWS. That means, as sons and daughters of God, we are invited into what He sees and what He knows.

Again, Jesus asks, **“Do you want to be made well?”** ⁷ **The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”**

This phrase, **“Do you want to be made well?”** is made up of three specific words, defined as **“wish, desire, will”** **“healthy, physically well”** and **“to become, enter a condition.”**

So, Jesus is addressing the man's desire, Jesus is describing the condition of health and suggesting a change in his condition from where he is at, to where Jesus is inviting him into. Jesus is basically asking the man if he desires to become healthy.

There is much debate between scholars on why Jesus would ask this question. Some scholars say it was simply Jesus desiring to engage him personally through asking a personal question. Others believe Jesus is giving the man the opportunity to express his desire. Others emphasize that Jesus is shifting the focus from the pool bringing healing to Jesus bringing healing. And still others believe Jesus is exposing the limitations of this man's existing expectations. Meaning the man's answer reveals what he truly believes about healing and where healing comes from. Can I say, I think all of these could be correct ... all at the same time.

Look at how the man answers Jesus' question, ⁷ **The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I**

am coming, another steps down before me.” Do you notice the man doesn’t answer Jesus’s question. He gives Jesus the reasons why he is unable to step into the system for healing and therefore miss his opportunity to meet God’s mercy in that moment. How often do I do the same thing? I have a specific system and way that I believe God’s mercy through healing, or any other avenue, is meeting me. The truth is His mercy can meet us in 1000 different ways, some of those which we can be completely unaware of in the moment. Basically, the man was focused on how he thought healing would happen, based on past experiences and traditions.

Essentially, Jesus was offering healing in a way the man, nor anyone else, had not anticipated. And, because God is always multi-tasking in people’s lives, He was more than likely offering more than healing. He was relationally reaching out to a man that He sees and He knows, and Jesus wanted that man to experience Him seeing and knowing him. Jesus was also giving this man an opportunity to unearth his true desire. Was his desire to get into the pool ... or was his desire for total transformation? Jesus often exposes the limitations that we place on Him in our interactions with Him. Not to shame us, but to help us experience the truth of who Jesus is!

2. Invitation as the Church – Be careful to not limit God’s mercy by what we have experienced in the past.

So, the man explains why he cannot get to the place where he expects healing. And then Jesus reveals that healing has come to him. As ... ⁸ **Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.”** ⁹ **And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.**

Jesus gives three specific directions. **Rise**, which means “to raise, awaken, get up.” **Take up**, which means “to lift, take away.” And **walk**, which means “to move about, conduct one’s life.” **And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.** The text presents healing as immediate, followed by the man’s actions. This is important because it shows that the man’s healing was not something he accomplished by his own strength. Jesus provided what the man lacked. Yet, at the very same time, the man was invited to respond to what Jesus

provided for him. This man was invited to walk out what Jesus had done in his life.

Again, this phrase **the man was made well**, is using words that directly answer Jesus' original question, **"Do you want to be made well?"** My sense is that Jesus asks us this same question today. And He isn't just asking us because He doesn't know our answer. In fact, He knows our answers better than we know our own answers. Again, He is unearthing belief systems that do not line up with who He is. Why? Because even though Jesus may desire healing for us, what I believe He desires even more is our transformation. This man by answering Jesus' question, could not do what had always been done (step into the pool to receive healing). The man was invited to respond to what Jesus was doing in the moment.

3. Invitation as the Church - **"Do you want to be made well?"**

How is God inviting you into His mercy today? What is He inviting you into, to rise, to awaken to? What is He inviting you to pick up, to take away (with)? What is He inviting you to walk out?

And that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." ¹¹ He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' " ¹² Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" ¹³ But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place.

John interjects an additional lesson and invitation for the church as he addresses the religious community, the law, and the rules around the Sabbath. **Jeremiah 17:21-22** specifically warns against carrying burdens on the Sabbath. Jewish interpretations of Sabbath observance developed detailed restrictions on what that meant, concerning carrying objects on the Sabbath. So, the religious community saw the man **"carrying his bed"** and immediately saw that act of breaking the law of the Sabbath, over the miracle of being able to carry his bed to begin with. This is fascinating to me that the religious community completely misses what Jesus did ... because they were so focused on what the man should not do.

4. Invitation as the Church – Don't miss the miraculous by focusing on the law (what a person should do).

The other fascinating part is that the man who received healing, did not know through whom he had received that healing. Essentially, he had encountered the work of Jesus without yet recognizing the person of Jesus. This very detail in the story tells me that people can experience the mercy of Jesus and not know they were experiencing the mercy of Jesus yet! The story is not finished. We see that Jesus, comes back around and seeks out the man a second time. If you remember, Jesus first, sees the man next to the pool of Bethesda, His mercy, and next Jesus finds him in the temple...

¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Jesus is shifting the focus from the physical restoration and healing the man just experienced ... direction in his life, how this man is to walk out his life moving forward. Jesus is calling this man to a changed way of living. By Jesus seeking out this man in the temple, Jesus is demonstrating that He cares about more than the man's restored physical condition. Jesus also cares about the direction in his life. Now, I am again, making my own observations, but what I see as fascinating that Jesus never tells the man His name. But we see that once Jesus gives the man direction in his life, the man knows it is Jesus.

¹⁵ The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. There is something about knowing Jesus and following Jesus. Meaning to know Jesus in a deeper and greater way, requires us to follow Him. Follow His direction for our lives. This thought has been coming back into my mind the past few weeks. Being a Christian is more than believing in God. Being a Christian requires that we follow Christ!

5. Invitation as the Church – FOLLOW Him! (obey)

So again, as we look at this story in the text, I see several invitations for us as the church...

1. Invitation as the Church – Be careful to not let religious activity keep us from seeing what God wants to do in the moment.
2. Invitation as the Church – Be careful to not limit God’s mercy by what we have experienced in the past.
3. Invitation as the Church - **“Do you want to be made well?”**
4. Invitation as the Church – Don’t miss the miraculous by focusing on the law (what a person should do)
5. Invitation as the Church – FOLLOW Him! (obey)

To look to Jesus ... in this story, we see that He is not limited by the systems, circumstances, or expectations through which people believe healing must come. He is the source of healing and wholeness!

Jesus Among Us 6.0

John 5:1-15

Invitation...

- A life lived WITH Jesus (relationship)
- Becoming LIKE Jesus (transformation)
- REVEALING Jesus (extension of God)

John 5:1-2

- **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, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.**
- **Bethesda – house of mercy**

John 5:3-4

- **³ In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.**

John 5:5-6

- **⁵ Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?”**
- **Jesus saw him** “to see, perceive, or notice”
- **knew** “to know, recognize, understand”
- the form of this word specifically means “having known”

Invitation as the Church –
Be careful to not let religious
activity keep us from
seeing what God wants to
do in the moment.

John 5:6-7

- **“Do you want to be made well?” ⁷ The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”**
- “wish, desire, will”
- “healthy, physically well”
- “to become, enter a condition”

- Jesus desiring to engage him personally through asking a personal question.
- Jesus is giving the man the opportunity to express his desire.
- Jesus is shifting the focus from the pool bringing healing to Jesus bringing healing.
- Jesus is exposing the limitations of this man's existing expectations.
- All can be true at the same time!

Invitation as the Church –
Be careful to not limit God's
mercy by what we have
experienced in the past.

John 5:8-9

- **⁸ Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” ⁹ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.**
- **Rise**, which means “to raise, awaken, get up.”
- **Take up**, which means “to lift, take away.”
- **Walk**, which means “to move about, conduct one’s life.”

Invitation as the Church – **“Do you want to be made well?”**

What is He inviting you into, to rise, to awaken to?

What is He inviting you to pick up, to take with?

What is He inviting you to walk out?

John 5:9-13

- **And that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.” ¹¹ He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’ ” ¹² Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” ¹³ But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place.**

- **Jeremiah 17:21-22** specifically warns against carrying burdens on the Sabbath.
- Jewish interpretations of Sabbath observance developed detailed restrictions on carrying objects on the Sabbath.
- The religious community saw the man “**carrying his bed**” and immediately saw that act of breaking the law of the Sabbath, over the miracle of being able to carry his bed to begin with.

Invitation as the Church –
Don't miss the miraculous
by focusing on the law
(what a person should do).

John 5:14

- **¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”**
- Jesus is calling this man to a changed way of living.
- Jesus cares about the direction in his life.

John 5:15

- **¹⁵ The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.**
- To know Jesus in a deeper and greater way, requires us to follow Him

Invitation as the Church –
FOLLOW Him!
(obey)

- Invitation as the Church – Be careful to not let religious activity keep us from seeing what God wants to do in the moment.
- Invitation as the Church – Be careful to not limit God's mercy by what we have experienced in the past.
- Invitation as the Church - “**Do you want to be made well?**”
- Invitation as the Church – Don't miss the miraculous by focusing on the law (what a person should do)
- Invitation as the Church – FOLLOW Him! (obey)

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