

Summer By The Sea

Week 4: Better Than Good

Objective: To invite us to live as people who are being made whole.

ICEBREAKER: Have you ever said you wanted something, but then realized getting it would require more change or effort than you expected?

- What was it?
- Did you still want it once you understood what it would require?

1. Questions with Deeper Answers

Jesus asks the man at Bethesda what seems like a very simple question:

“Do you want to get well?”

- Why does that question seem to have an obvious answer?
- Why might the answer actually be more complicated than it first appears?
- Have you ever had to wrestle with a question that became more difficult the longer you thought about it?

2. Looking for Relief

The sermon suggested:

Most of us come to Jesus for relief.

- What do you think about that statement?
- What kinds of relief do people commonly seek from Jesus?
- Is there anything wrong with coming to Jesus because we are hurting or need help? Why or why not?

3. “I Have No One...”

Instead of answering Jesus directly, the man explains why he has been unable to get into the pool.

- What do you hear in his response?
- Why do you think Jesus asked about wellness while the man talked about the water?
- What excuses or explanations can become part of the way we understand ourselves?

4. Relief vs. Restoration

The sermon made this distinction:

Relief is when the pain eases. Restoration is when what is broken is made whole.

- How would you describe the difference between relief and restoration?
- Why is relief sometimes more attractive than restoration?
- Why can restoration feel frightening?

5. Leaving the Pool Behind

The man thought he needed better access to the water. Jesus told him:

“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”

- What did Jesus offer that was greater than what the man was seeking?
- What might the pool have represented in this man's life after thirty-eight years?
- What are some “pools” people continue returning to because they have become familiar?

6. Living Like Whole People

The sermon stated:

“Restoration is the grace of Jesus making us whole—and then calling us to live like whole people.”

- What does it mean to “live like a whole person”?
- Why is obedience connected to restoration?
- How is this different from simply trying harder to be a better person?

7. Relief from Sin or Restoration from Sin?

Jesus did not merely come to remove the penalty of sin. He came to restore what sin has damaged.

- How does sin affect more than our standing before God?
- What areas of life can sin deform or damage?
- How does the idea of being restored as God's image bearers deepen your understanding of salvation?

8. Do You Want to Be Made Whole?

Bring the question home personally.

- Where have you been asking Jesus for relief while possibly resisting restoration?
- Is there an excuse, habit, attitude, or pattern you keep returning to?
- What step of obedience might Jesus be asking you to take?

FINAL THOUGHT

The man at Bethesda wanted help getting into the pool.

Jesus wanted to get him on his feet.

We often come to Jesus asking Him to make our brokenness less painful, our circumstances more manageable, or our lives a little easier. And sometimes, in His mercy, He gives us relief.

But Jesus offers something far greater.

He offers to make us new.

Jesus offers more than relief; He offers restoration.

THIS WEEK – GET UP AND WALK

This week, invite Jesus to do more than make life easier. Give Him permission to restore what is broken.

NAME IT

Identify one area where you have been asking for relief while resisting change.

BRING IT

Bring your excuse honestly to Jesus. Don't hide it or defend it.

OBEY

Take the next clear step Jesus is asking you to take.

- Repent.
- Forgive.
- Confess.
- Ask for help.
- Surrender control.

WALK

Each day ask:

Am I returning to the pool—or am I learning to live as someone Jesus is restoring?