

**Do you want to be healed?
John Ch 5 vs 1-14 (slide)**

Jesus' coming ushered in the Kingdom of God. He introduced a way of living that was so different to anything before. As We study His life in the gospels we get a window into this new way of life as someone who believes in God. It's hard to use the term "religion" with the kingdom of God because Jesus seemed to contradict religiosity at every turn. Yet this is the term that so often gets used to describe us followers of Jesus. What religion are you? How do you answer that? (Ryan: "I'm not religious" ... well as a follower of Jesus neither am I. So, what is different?)

"Religion is the story of what a sinful man tries to do for a holy God; the Gospel is the story of what a holy God has done for sinful men." Roy Gustafson (slide)

As we spend time in the gospel of John we begin to see what is so different. In the next two weeks I would like us to look at two encounters that John records for us to help us understand what is so different about life in the kingdom of God.

Remember John's purpose for writing is:

John 20 vs 31 (slide)

³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John records seven miracles that Jesus performs, all which point to Him as the messiah and Son of God. Here is one of them. There was always so much going on when Jesus did things. The miracle itself is not the point, rather it is pointing to who he was.

John 5 vs 1-16 (slide)

Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. ² Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ⁵ One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

⁷ “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”⁸ Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”⁹ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,¹⁰ and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”¹¹ But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”¹² So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”¹³ The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.¹⁶ So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him.

VS 1

Feast of Jews...men within 15- 20 miles were expected to go to three pilgrimage feasts:

Passover

Pentecost

Tabernacles

Jesus is attending as a Jewish man, but it is also strategic because of the opportunity to meet with people who are god seekers. Jesus and even later the apostles were always around the temple and also during the feasts. There was a pool near the temple where you would find the sick, the lame and the paralyzed...I call it the cruel pool.

1. The cruel pool vs 3-7(slide)

Beneath the pool was a subterranean stream or something like that which every now and again bubbled up and disturbed the waters. The belief was that the disturbance was caused by an angel, and that the first person to get into the pool after the troubling of the water would be healed from any illness from which he was suffering. It does feel like a cruel belief and 38 years later this man is still lying there.... Till Jesus comes

2. Do you want to be healed? VS 6 (slide)

Jesus initiates

Do you want to get healed?

Isn't the answer obvious? But is it? Was his disability giving him something?

Source of income, mercy, attention and pity. My crutch, which helps me with my disability, becomes part of me, my identity, without it I feel vulnerable.

The question Jesus asks all of us today is no different ...do you not want to get healed? Seems to obvious...as a kid to my Dad...why don't you want it? Living for self, as destructive and dysfunctional as it was, was still too attractive

Addictions, sinful actions, marital breakdown, relational struggle, worry and fear, unforgiveness, self-pity, so the list goes on. What is my sin or dysfunction giving me that makes me not want to be healed? The answer is not so obvious after all.

Do you want to be healed? Jesus doesn't heal us so we can remain in our sin or dysfunction.

I met a guy the other day. He didn't want to leave his life of sin. He wanted Jesus to free him from the consequences of his sin. I couldn't help Him.

J... How can God put me through all of this and yet all of it was his own doing...Father, husband, work...His disobedience and sinful behavior had brought destruction on his life and God was being blamed... "Do you want to be healed?"

3. Healing through obedience vs 7-8 (Slide)

Vs 7 shows the man's desire to be healed

7 "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." (slide)

This man didn't even know Jesus to have faith in Him and yet He healed him. In fact, he didn't know who Jesus was after He healed him. We need to be careful about putting formulas to acts of grace. Most often grace breaks the rules we put in place. Don't put healing in a box (got to have faith, right?). Notice what Jesus

does. He doesn't say he is healed, He gives him a command to do something he has never done. The man obeys and discovers he is healed. His action brings his healing.

Could my healing be connected to an act of obedience? I want the easy miracle and God is saying "All you have to do is obey."

Pray for my marriage...do you want to be healed? Let's start with you and your part and your journey of healing that may be the answer to healing in your marriage. If you don't want to be a loving husband and lay down your life for your wife, then how can I pray for healing? Let's pray about being an obedient husband and see what healing may come.

How often is my healing to be found in my simple obedience to Christ. Peter says, "I will show you my faith by what I do."

So often we are trying to cope with the consequence of disobedience. Sin management. Our prayers, our counsel is directed at consequences of sin. We want God to wave the magic wand and make it all right. If you decided to obey God in what He has already been revealed, how much healing and freedom will come? Surrender of self to Lordship of Christ.

4. Problem with legalism (vs8-12) (slide)

We see in this account the problem with legalism.

Jesus deliberately did things on the Sabbath to confront the Jewish leaders. After all, He could have waited 24 hours to heal this lame man by the Pool of Bethesda. He had been paralyzed for 38 years; what difference would one more day make? And, Jesus could have told him to leave his mat there by the pool and come back and get it the next day, so as not to provoke the religious leaders. There was a bigger more serious issue at stake here. Instead of the law being used to bring protection and freedom it is being used for bondage and oppression.

Legalism is powerless to save but powerful to enslave
Grace has power to save and bring freedom (slide)

A man is healed from a 38-year-old disability and they are concerned that he is carrying his mat. The fact that he can even carry his mat is a miracle. Our judging

and legalizing can make us take our eye off what really matters. We lose compassion and understanding of the kingdom. They didn't ask "who was the man who healed you?" but "who was the man who told you to break the law?" They cared nothing that this man was helped and healed. His life was completely changed.

Legalism has no place for the gift of rejoicing.

Their religiosity and legalism meant they completely missed the work of God almighty and His presence. There was pride in keeping the law and yet spiritual jealousy because here was someone doing things they were not able to do. They could not rejoice in God's work.

All of us have our own lens of legalism out of which we view faith. Let us be sure it doesn't prevent us from seeing the work of God. The older I get the less dogmatic I am because of my growing understanding and experience of grace.

5.Surrender needs to follow encounter vs 14-15 (slide)

Jesus didn't stick around but then finds the man again. He is at the temple. He connected his healing to an act of God. What was the next step? Now he needed to leave a life of sin.

Vs 14

¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you (slide)

An experience of healing or encounter with Jesus is not the end point. The encounter is part of the journey of a surrendered life to Christ. The miracle has no meaning if it does not bring about the deeper healing from death brought on by sin.

Healing is only complete when I leave my life of sin and live fully surrendered to Jesus. An encounter with God will give me a moment of healing but now I choose to walk in Him (How many guys do I know who I saw have encounters but have not remained faithful). This is what we mean when we talk about worship as encounter and surrender. Great revivals---repentance... Lasting transformation.

It's important here to see the relationship between grace and sin. Does grace mean I am easy on sin? We will get into this next week

6. The danger of self-preservation v 16 (Slide)

¹⁶ So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. (slide)

Understanding of anti-Jesus movement

Jewish nation was held together by their beliefs...they had been conquered many times and scattered. Their religion set them apart and was the binding force that kept them together

Distinctive people

Rules and regulations to be kept regarding all facets of life.

Anyone threatening this religious system was an enemy

That's not bad right?

Problem with this:

- Misinterpreted the Word of God
- Forgot the whole purpose for the law
- Couldn't keep it
- System meant they Missed the Messiah

Were the Jews chosen for self-preservation or to be bearers of the light that would draw nations to God (Is 60 makes this clear)? If we get this wrong, we lose the whole purpose for our existence. One is defensive and exclusive, the other is offensive and inclusive. If we spend all our time and energy being concerned with preserving ourselves, our people and what we have in our culture we are making the God of the Bible a tribal God. And that He is not!! He cannot be a part of that.

Rev 5 vs 9-10 (slide)

and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Jesus followers are told to go and make Disciples of all cultures and tribes, bringing them into the Kingdom of God where there is no Jew or Gentile, but we are all one in Him. It's His church, His kingdom. The only fear we need to have is

when we are no longer messengers of this kingdom and look only to ourselves for then I have stepped outside the Kingdom of God and He is not a part of that.

John 3 vs 16 (slide)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life

7. Conclusion

I want to invite the ushers to come forward as we prepare for communion This is why we do communion. We remember the ultimate healing that Jesus bought for me on the cross. He died so that I could live. This table is for those who know His healing. It's a table of remembrance and thanksgiving. For those who don't, His invitation is here today.

Two invitations: (slide)

1. Do you want to be healed?

The invitation is here. "I purchased you with my blood so you can have life.' Do you want this life? If you want this life come to me. Come a surrender. Come and have your first communion with the Healer.

2. Will you leave your life of sin?

Had an encounter, know the truth but have lost your way. Repent, choose me. Inviting you back. Let's all examine our hearts. For some you need to come as an act of obedience and of your will. Come and pray with someone and take communion.

As you receive the bread and the cup please take time to remember your healing with thanksgiving, recommit yourself to Him then eat and drink when you are ready.