

That You May Have Life in His Name - April 23, 2023

John 5:1-17

Pastor Lee Cadden

Last week, we concluding John 4 together and Matt left us with this truth:

Believing God looks like believing God is... God.

God, before I ask you for a thing... can I begin by praising You for who You are and what You have done...

Truly, you are the only one who can...but Jesus more than any request of mine, You are my ONLY ONE.

In that Spirit, Let us read the 17 verses of John 5.

Context:

- John gives no clear indication of which feast they are travelling to Jerusalem for, only that it was their custom to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate together.
- John sets the scene for a particular pool, in a particular part of the city, near a particular gate. He gives details of the location, anchoring deep in history - a real city, with real gates, and a named/described pool
 - In the Bible, history is confirmed, revealed to us.
 - This is not a cute story.
- Today we will see another healing → not made up, but real, factual, in real time and space.
- At this pool many were brought in or walked in - “a multitude of invalids.”
- And there was one there on this day who had been that way for 38 years.
- What are they doing there?
 - If you have an NIV or ESV Bible (and likely other translations) - v.4 is excluded (or footnoted)
 - V.3 says the paralyzed, the lame, the blind were laying under these porches
 - V.5 says one of them had been that way for a long time.
 - Its believed that while the KJV includes v.4, the earliest manuscripts include this description in the margins of the text, a note from one of the scribes:
 - They lay there because (v.4): *an angel f the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred the ater: whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the waters was healed of whatever disease he had.*
 - Just imagine: you have _____ diagnosis. And your only hope is healing “at a certain season” in waters that you have to be the first to jump into whenever the water moves.
 - Was this healing historical? Factual? Absolutely Possible.
 - There are other places in the Bible where people are healed in unique ways by God.
 - Certainly seems to be the real deal, there are people everywhere. Laying in every corner waiting for the angel to stir the water...

And in walks JESUS.

V.6 - **Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time...**

- **Ok**, Jesus shows up with hurting people everywhere.
- And he **sees** this man and **knew** his condition. (Jesus knew everyone’s condition)
- But Jesus comes onto this pool deck for a very specific purpose.

Do you want to be healed?

V.7-9 - The sick man answered, “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.” 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.

Here is the Son of God, asking a man if he wants to made well, and all he can focus on are his surroundings, and his own failure to get into the water on time.

Of this posture, **Calvin** wrote, “**The sick man does what we nearly all do. He limites God’s help to his own ideas and does not dare promise himself more than he concieves in his mind.**”

The man’s attitude toward this stranger is speculation at best, but you can imagine the interaction.

- Do you want to be healed?
- Do i want to be healed? Man every time i try to get healed someone beats me to it. Its pointless, i don’t even know why i’m here.
- 38 years in the same condition will make anyone bitter, resentful.

But Jesus...oh Jesus. He doesn’t look upon either this man’s prospects, his condition, his attitude, or any promises of faithfulness...

- No, Jesus sees an image bearer, one God loves, wallowing in his own brokenness.
- And he moves in.
- He engages. Jesus, just like with the woman at the well, initiates this relationship.
- Simply because he chooses to.

Jesus speaks, “get up, roll up your mat, and walk.”

- And because Jesus says so, a glimmer of hope dawns, and the man obeys.
- And by the power of God and the salvation of God, healing and life comes after 38 years of hopelessness.

****** aside ****** let me say here that many scholars make many connections to Israel’s history in the details of this story. If your wanting a deep dive into the symbolism of this man’s healing, trust me you can find it.

But for our purposes today, let us look at the facts.

1. Jesus, a real man and very real Son of God, shows up at Bethesda where many are sick, hurting, and possibly dying.
2. Jesus walks up to a man who had been lame (in some way) for nearly 4 decades - a lifetime in that day - and John records that he “saw him and knew his condition.”
3. Everyone there was putting there hope in slim chance that they made it into the healing waters first.
4. Jesus asks the man a question.
5. But the man doesn’t answer. He complains about his condition and the lack of help he needs to get there, and how all of these other selfish lame people get into the water first.
6. And Jesus chooses to heal him, anyway.
 - a. There’s no reason it should have been him and not anyone else.
7. And Jesus does so ... on the Sabbath.

V.10-12 so the Jews (or the Jewish leaders) begin the investigation.

- Who did this work on Sabbath? And oh by the way, its not even lawful to pick up your own bed
- “There was a man, the man who healed me, he said pick up your bed and walk.”
 - Apparently propriety goes out the window when you can walk for the first time in 38 years.

Note: much of the Jewish leaders issue with Jesus was in his breaking of their rules, not the law of the Old Testament. They had added an atrocious amount of rules to the already very full requirements for the people of God to be set apart.

“Who is this man?”

- V.13 “now the man who had been healed didn’t know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn” into the crowd.
- But the question lingers, “Who is this man?”

V.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.”

- We don’t know the condition of the man when he became ill.
- We don’t know his heart when he meets Jesus.
- But Jesus knew them both. And when he sees him right after he’s healed him, Jesus gives him a strong warning, just as he would in other situations;
 - *Go, sin no more (leave your life of sin)*
 - *So that this kind of consequence, worse actually wont come upon you*

Brothers/Sisters: there are consequences for sin. For this man, his condition was tied to his physical well being.

We should embrace the reality that SIN (the condition of this world and our own depravity) has caused all sickness, pain, sadness, loss and death. and...

We should reject the idea that **all** sin/pain in your life or my life is caused by specific sins that you or I commit, but certainly should not presume that there is never a connection between sin, mine and yours, and the consequences of our choices.

And it is in that very moment, that very tension, that Jesus of Nazareth walks into this man’s life and **HEALS HIM ANYWAY.**

- Does he obey Jesus a second time? **Will this seed find itself on rocky soil or the good deep rich kind?**

V15 - “the man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus...”

V.16 - and this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, becuase” he was breaking their rules, messing with their authority...

V.17 - but Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

- Jewish belief was that only God could work on the Sabbath (life in the birth of a new child or judgment for one who had died both occured on the Sabbath).
- Jesus is getting down to it...
 - My Father (Son of God)
 - My Father is working.
 - So I am working (I am one with Him. I am God)

While this truly begins the shift in John's gospel from curiosity to opposition and animosity...let us take a few moments and observe Jesus intersecting our own brokenness and pain.

From last week, do you believe that Jesus is ... God? And from Bethesda, do you hear him ask you:

Do you want to be well? Do you want life?

"Spurgeon pictured the multitude waiting around the waters of the pool, all of them waiting - instead of looking to Jesus. How foolish this waiting is for so many people."

- Some wait for a more convenient season. Some wait for dreams and visions. Some wait for signs and wonders. Some wait to be compelled. Some wait for a revival. Some wait for particular feelings. Some wait for a celebrity.¹
- All of them waiting. None of them seeing Jesus.

Jesus knows that not all who are sick actually want to be made well. Some have lost all hope, withered both in body and in soul, while others have grown comfortable in their brokenness, comfortable with the identity of "invalid."

Jesus sincerely asks, but when Jesus asks you that question, He demands a response.

Do you want to be made well? Do you want eternal life?

- Or are you content to stay in your old way? Do you think you can make your own way?
- There is some glimmer of hope in this man who is healed, but he betrays Jesus almost immediately.
- The pressure from the Jewish leaders was too much.

Jesus promises healing and life not comfort and ease.

Jesus heals him and then compels him to live a different kind of life.

The grace of God that heals you is the grace of God that sustains you.

- Jesus doesn't heal sons and daughters and toss them to the wind with a "good luck out there, see you on the other side..."
- The promise of God is plain - "you will have trouble in this life...AND ... I will be with you to the end"
- But children of the King cannot remain by the pool...
 - We cannot keep our eyes downcast
 - We cannot continue complaining about our condition.
- You have been bought, paid for.
- Jesus walked into your life and "sees you, knows you" and died for you that you have may have life and healing. And the command lingers,
- But for those who believe by faith, it sounds like this "**Come, follow me. Come me to all who are thirsty and live. I have come that you may have life, life to the fullest.**"

Jesus will finish the work

I and My Father are working. We are saving. We are healing. We are restoring. Don't you want to be healed?

¹ I'm indebted to David Guzik for this summary of Spurgeon's picture of waiting. *Enduring Word Commentary, John.*