

Do You Want to be Healed?

~ John 5:1-18

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November 8 2020

Last summer marked the 50th anniversary of the first human to walk on the moon. It was July 20, 1969, when Neil Armstrong took his famous steps, an estimated 650 million people watched on TV. The world held it's breath. That moon walk turned into a beacon of hope during a troubled time. The mission was called Apollo 11.

Then came Apollo 12 in November though. This turned out to be another successful moon walk for the crew. Less people watched on TV. Moonwalking was becoming routine.

Fast forward to April 1970 and the Apollo 13 mission. By the time it happened, the space program could barely get time on TV. People were already bored with going to the moon. A lot less people paid attention until the explosion on board and the drama of trying to bring home the 3 astronauts alive. But by Apollo 14, TV ratings crashed. People said, "The moon? Benn there, done that."

The same thing can happen with our interest in Jesus. We first come to Him and He's our savior. We may experience a deep love and passion for Christ. We celebrate His rescue of us from our sins. He rescues us from our sins and we're overwhelmed by His great love for us. Then life goes on and there's nothing spectacular. We may get

bored with Jesus or forget our need for Him. Then a crisis happens and we cry out for help. He helps us through and grows us through it. Then life becomes ordinary. We might believe that we know pretty much all there is regarding Jesus.

That might happen to us today as we consider the person of Jesus again. He is the answer to the question, "Who can provide the greatest hope when we face addictions, sin issues or trouble?" I wonder if we might yawn or tune out because we think we've heard all this before. I have prayed this would not happen today.

I pray that our focus on our Lord Jesus will rekindle or stoke our hope in Him. I pray that this hope will help us look at our troubles with a greater confidence in Christ. If you are dealing with a sin issue or addiction, I pray that your hope in Christ to release you will grow. If you love or are trying to help someone dealing with this, I pray your hope in our Lord to impact this situation will grow. If you are simply trying to live the Christian life and deal with life's regular challenges, I pray your hope in Christ's care, concern and power will grow today. So, though Jesus is our hope, let us look again at Him and discover why we hope.

We will look at passage where we will see Jesus. It will remind us of who He is; what He is like and what He can do. Then we will look at how focusing on this Jesus can help us with anything we face in life.

John 5:1-18 (ESV)

5 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, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. ³ In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁵ One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ 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?” ⁷ 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.” ⁸ Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews^[a] said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.” ¹¹ But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” ¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” ¹³ 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. 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.” ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

¹⁸ This is 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.”

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. John tells us about a pool by the sheep gate in Jerusalem. The pool is called Bethesda. It had 5 roofed colonnades surrounding it. They were like outdoor porches with roofs over them. John tells us that a multitude of invalids lay on these porches. They were not there to sunbathe. They

longed for healing. John tells us the blind, lame and paralyzed gathered here.

Why lay by this pool? People believed that there was a magical or miraculous stirring of the waters. The first person to get into the stirred up water got healed. No one knew when the stirring would happen. It was just a race of those present to get in there. Some must have had family members stay with them to help them. Into this scene walks Jesus. Imagine hundreds of people along with all the noise they make.

Jesus comes to this one guy who had been an invalid for 38 years. We don't if Jesus asked him about his condition or just knew about it with supernatural knowledge. Yet Jesus addresses the man with a penetrating question in verse 6. “Do you want to be healed?” Isn't that kind of a ridiculous question to ask of a person lying by a healing pool?

Yet, maybe it's not so ridiculous. Sometimes people don't really want to be healed. Maybe they're afraid of the change such healing will bring. Take someone struggling with an addiction for example. They might realize that their addictions hurts others and themselves. Yet it gets them through the week. They have something familiar they can turn to for relief when life gets stressful. If they got healed from

that, where would they turn? How would they cope? What would they have to look forward to on weekends?

Some others might not want to be healed because of the benefits that come with sickness or having a condition. You get people's sympathy and attention. Some use their limitation to boss others around or get others to do things for them. Maybe some might feel the need to construct a new identity.

"Do you want to be healed," asks Jesus of the man who has suffered for 38 years with some lameness. The man answers "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." Is he indirectly answering "Yes" to Jesus' question? It seems he believes the only possible solution to his condition is to get in the pool first. Yet he concludes this is virtually impossible. He has no one to carry or help him in first. Maybe he thinks Jesus will help him into the pool. Or maybe he is a cranky old man who is complaining about the unfairness of life. He might believe he could have been healed a long time ago. If only the authorities had a first come first served policy in place. If only they had one of those little machines that spits out numbers when you arrive. The next time the pool stirs, they would call his number and he could get his healing. But the unfair system prevents him. There is

certainly no expectation from this guy that Jesus could heal him. Or to put it another way, the man expresses no faith in Jesus' ability to heal.

But in spite of this, Jesus says, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." He just said he needs help to get into the pool. Yet the man feels something different. John tells us in verse 9 that "at once the man was healed." Then the man takes up his bed and walks!

Now remember, there is a multitude of people laying on these porches under these roofs. The man has been an invalid for 38 years. Some people probably know him. They suddenly see him walking with his mat. There must have been some huge commotion and excitement. This man experienced healing and the waters did not even stir. Jesus steps away amidst the chaos.

The man begins to walk while carrying his mat. Then John tells us at the end of verse 9 that it was the Sabbath. This was the Jewish day of rest. They rested from all work on the 7th day or Sabbath just as God rested from His work on the 7th day after creation. Some Jewish religious leaders see the man walking. Carrying his mat went against their interpretation of the law. They immediately inform him of the Sabbath violation.

What does the man do? Does he proclaim the greatness of God for his great healing? No. He wants to get out of trouble. So he basically says in verse 11 – “It’s not my fault. The man who healed me commanded to take up my bed and walk.” These religious leaders completely blow by the healing part of the man’s answer. They just want to know who would dare tell the man to take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath. But the man doesn’t know Jesus’ name nor can he see him. The place is crowded.

So later Jesus finds the man in the temple area. Maybe the man walks there for the first time in 38 years. Jesus says to him, “See you are well!” You are healed in other words. Remember that question asked back in verse 6? So now what will the man do with his new life? Jesus instructs him in verse 14 with some disturbing words at first glance. “Sin no more,” or “stop sinning.” Why? “So that nothing worse may happen to you.” Is Jesus saying that the guy lay as an invalid for 38 years because of his own sin? Possibly. Sometimes sin leads to physical consequences. A person drives drunk and gets in a major accident. They have serious injuries that permanently affect them. That sin caused their ongoing sickness.

Yet more troubling is the possibility that the man sinned and God then struck him with lameness in response to his sin. Does that

happen? It seems to on the rare occasion. God struck down a Herod with illness and death when the king boasted in his own power. God struck Nebuchadnezzar with madness when he boasted of his own accomplishments. Yet such cases seem rare. We cannot judge this. We can only see this if God reveals it.

It could be that Jesus’ comment has nothing to do with the man’s physical health. He instead is talking about his spiritual health. So he points out that the man has been healed of his physical ailment, which was terrible. Yet the man has a choice of how he will live in response to this. Will he address his own sin? Will he actually commit his life to the one who healed Him or His Father in heaven? If he doesn’t something worse will happen to him. He will spend eternity apart from God. Would the man heed Jesus’ warning?

Verse 15 doesn’t point in that direction. Instead of going to worship in the temple, resolving to sin no more. He turns on Jesus. The man now knows Jesus’ name and goes to the authorities so he can clear his own name. Those who go to the authorities about Jesus usually don’t believe in Him. Think about the people who witnessed Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. Some go to inform the authorities who then decide it’s time to kill Jesus. Or think about Judas. So this man seems unmoved towards faith in Jesus.

His report leads to further persecution of Jesus. Verse 16. “And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.” Jesus respond to this charge in verse 17. “My Father is working until now and I too am working.” But this answer leads to even more trouble according to verse 18. “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 to God.” The story will continue in the next verses with Jesus basically expanding on His answers and identity.

But for today, I promised you that we would look at Jesus to hopefully see Him in a way that boosts our hope. So **what does this passage reveal about Jesus?** First, it reveals that **Jesus is all-powerful Lord**. Just like God is all-powerful, Jesus is all-powerful. The word “omnipotence” names this. One commentator defines the omnipotence of God like this – God has the power to carry out His holy will. Nothing can stop him or overpower God. Jesus demonstrates His all-powerful nature in two ways.

First, he instantaneously heals a man who has been an invalid for 38 years. He speaks the word and the man can suddenly stand, carry his bed and walk. Such a miracle could only be accomplished by one

with supernatural power. In this healing, Jesus demonstrates His lordship over illness, lameness and degeneration of the body. He does it with a word not even a touch.

Jesus also reveals Himself as powerful Lord because He heals on the Sabbath. There was only one person who was “allowed” to do His caring work on the Sabbath – the Lord God. Though He ceased from His work of creation on the 7th day, He continues other works. He saves people on the Sabbath. He sovereignly rules over those born and dying on the Sabbath. At the instant of death, He must do the work of ruling on where their soul goes. Jesus’ work on the Sabbath falls into the same category. He is Lord over the Sabbath. Jesus claims this prerogative in John 5:17 – “My Father is working until now.” His always at His good work – even on the Sabbath. “And I am working.” So Jesus claims the privilege only held by the Father for Himself. So this passage reveals Jesus as “all powerful lord” over disease and over the Sabbath.

It also reveals a second reality about Him. Jesus is the **Son of God, equal with God.** In verse 17, Jesus calls God His Father. John explains to us the significance of this claim in verse 18. “The Jews sought to kill him . . . because he was even calling God his own Father,

making himself equal to God.” Jesus makes it very clear who He is and His relationship to the Father.

All this adds up to what this passage reveals about Jesus. **By healing the lame man on Sabbath, Jesus reveals Himself as all powerful Lord and Son of God.** Now think about how that reality about Jesus might impact your prayers. When I remember and meditate on the reality that Jesus is all powerful Lord and Son of God? I experience hope - because the all-powerful Lord can impact and intervene in situations that are beyond me. I experience relief – I can entrust to God that which I can’t do anything about; or don’t know enough about. I experience strengthening – because the Lord enables me to go forward to face whatever comes because of His power, presence and help.

Think about how this might help those struggling with addictions. Last week we talked about speaking truth in love to those struggling with an addiction or some sin. They may not have expressed a desire for help. Speaking the truth in love aims to help make them aware of this need. So say they have heard this and are now willing to receive help. We talked about potential follow up steps last week.

But there is a reality that those struggling with addiction and all of us struggling with sin must accept. Here’s the reality – **the struggle**

against addiction and/or sin must be fought daily by trusting in the all-powerful Lord and Son of God. There must be an initial turning point. We must first turn away from our old way of life. Then we must turn towards Christ as our hope and help. But that initial commitment needs regular renewal. For the person struggling, it needs daily renewal. Every day, we need a renewed commitment to and dependence on Christ.

It helps to have some key verses of hope to focus on.

2 Corinthians 5:15 – Christ died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

1 Thess. 1:9-10 – You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he has raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Titus 2:11-14 - The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “no” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

2 Peter 1:3 (which you will be looking at next week). His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

1 Corinthians 10:13-14 – No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. Therefore my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

When struggling against addictions and struggling against sin, we need to take one of these verses and pray them for the whole day. Those who live with or love the struggling need to focus on the hope we have in Christ. John 5:17 is a great verse of hope. Jesus said, “My Father is always at his work and I too am working.” It may be the Sabbath day. It may seem like nothing is happening. But the Father and the Son are always at their work and have not forgotten you. Jesus death on the cross and His blood purchased the blessing of God working on our behalf.

So – I pray that you have not yawned or ignored Jesus, the all-powerful Lord and Son of God today. If you do not know Christ and have never turned to Him, Jesus asks “Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be made well from your spiritual sickness and the affliction

of sin? It’s not a small decision. It is a life changing trust. Yet it is the path to wholeness and life with God. So you will need to put the trust of your life upon Christ today.

So as we come to the Lord’s Table now, I want to invite you to come to all-powerful Son of God. Come and worship. Come and remember. Come and ask for His help in your life.