

John 5 (1-15) – Leaving the Pool of Pain

We have all known what it is like when we don't see any way out of what we are in. We are often tempted to fall back into our old, comfortable yet miserable ways. The world has its fads, frauds, and fascinations, and sometimes we follow along with the crowd. We think we've found the pool of prosperity but we actually languish at the pool of pain until Jesus makes us realize the reality of His presence in our lives. This guy was living with failure, fear, and frustration but Jesus is the living water and His fountain never runs dry.

The problem addressed: *Do you want to be healed?* Grace presents itself. Jesus confronted him but he didn't condemn him. Jesus is not yelling at the man for being hurt, He is asking the man if he wants off this treadmill system. We shouldn't just rail at people who are practicing wrong things we should present them with the gospel. Transformed hearts will result in transformed lives. Even Christians need to hear the gospel, because as we realize and internalize what Jesus has done for us, the fullness of that, then we can live for today by having an eye for tomorrow. We can leave our failures, fears, and frustrations behind because we know who our eternal source is and His eternal plan for our lives.

All that those failures did was to bring us to Jesus, to make us realize our need for Him. All those fears are drowned in the sea of faith; all we need to do is swim in it, realizing that we cannot drown because God is our source of eternal breath. All those frustrations can be finally dealt the death blow when we realize that Jesus wins the race for us even when we can't even seem to get started, or we fall along the way. If you believe in Jesus then God believes in you. You may fall down but you can always get back up and walk because Jesus rose from the dead. He gives us new life, eternal, spiritual life. He raises us from the spiritually dead, He gives us the ultimate healing, and if He can do that, He can heal your hurts right now. Do you want to be healed?

Think about that scene at the pool, when the waters were stirring, it would be mayhem. People are motivated by movement, and among those whose life has stalled, any sign of hope can be a cause for chaos. Physically, mentally, relationally, financially, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, we all have had areas where we were or are more invalid than strong. Instead of looking to the source of life, people treat life like a zero sum game, and when others may beat us to the punch, life seems to knock us out.

Many people don't think they're broken, just broke down, but when we meet Jesus for real it makes us realize we have no hope but Him, there is no other man, and there is no other pool. Most times we don't realize He is all we need until He is all we have.

We have a tendency to believe that we can always evaluate everything that happens to us correctly. We trust our power to process situations. We think we know a blessing or a curse when we see one. This man answered Jesus by going on about what the natural situation was, but Jesus was about to cause him to see with spiritual eyes. Sometimes things are not what they seem, and our trials are often wrapped around our triumphs. Many times we miss the ministry in our lives because we're looking for God to minister to us in a certain way.

Most of us want to see God move in our lives but we want to call the shots on how that should be done. People whose pride has not been broken may be all the way down in a sea of despair, but they will still have an attitude of, “Help me in the way I want to be helped, or I won’t be helped, and I will blame you for not helping me”, and/or “Help me out of the pit and then give me back the shovel.” We have all done this with God; we can’t answer His question with a real “yes”. We are not willing to do what it takes. We want it our way, but Jesus doesn’t offer to put the man in the pool. Are you willing to answer Jesus, not knowing what He will say next?

The prescription administered: *Get up, take up your bed, and walk.* Faith acts on the grace offered. The man could have given this or that argument again, but Jesus said to come to the real waters (Isaiah 55:1-2, 8-9 / John 4:13-14). We get to be fools for the wrong pools (Jeremiah 2:13), but when we truly encounter Jesus, His grace causes us to act in faith. The man had not sought Jesus, and though lots of other hurting people were around, Jesus only came to the one man. Sometimes, what we need seems so close, and we think we know the right place, right time, and the right way to get it, yet it always seems to be just out of our grasp. That is when Jesus shows us that if we will do as He says, we find that He is a greater source and the solution to all our real problems. Are you willing to do what He says, even if you haven’t done it before?

This man’s whole world was about to change. Yes it would be for the better but now he would have new things to deal with. Now he would have to go to work! It is the same for us, there are always new “worries” that will come our way, but we have to continue to leave behind the “what if’s” and the “if only’s”. You have to realize that there is no grace for your imagination other than repenting toward God and renewing your mind. This man could have continued to complain rather than get up and walk, and we have to get up and keep walking by faith. Leave your failures, fears, and frustrations behind, take up that bed and walk!

You might say that you would be willing to take up that bed, but are you willing to take up your cross? That is a metaphor for denying yourself the things that you want to do, and instead obeying the commands of God as an act of worship.

The principle of spiritual life is self-denial; if you find it difficult to obey God, your problem isn’t that you lack the right motivation; it is that you refuse to surrender control of your life to God, and you try to find some way to please God without setting the flesh aside. The solution is to set aside your own desires, and present yourself to God as a willing servant (Romans 12:1-2 / 1 Peter 4:1-2). This is what it means to walk in the Spirit.

Your cross to carry is not the sin; it is giving it up and having to feel the pain. Most people would rather hang out at the pool of pain and complain than have to face the pain of leaving their sickbed of sin and selfishness. Repentance hurts, but it’s the only way to be happy in God. Otherwise all you’ll keep doing is trying to please God in the flesh and be miserable.

If you are a saved person and you want to know what to do about your particular situation, are you willing to follow the direction and the wisdom Jesus is giving you to follow? This man had Jesus right there, but what about us? How do we know what to do next? Jesus has come to us, and asks if we want to move on from where we are. The Bible gives us wisdom and tells us to ask for it and expect to get it (James 1:5-6). The grace will be there, but will we act in faith?

Vs.5 – if we need wisdom on how to walk in joy while enduring trials and growing in maturity through them (vs.2-4), we can ask for it, and it will come. God says He will give it but sometimes we don't seem to get it because we are looking for something else. It will come to us through our bible reading, prayer, our daily situations, through godly people, and even by seeing ungodly people do things. God promises to deliver the wisdom but we have to open the package.

Vs.6 – This is not about having no doubts at all; it is that you don't let any doubts keep you from acting in faith. If you are willing to do what He shows, He is willing to show what to do. Wisdom is not the shortcut to a solution it is the road to recovery. Faith follows that road. Again, this asking in faith is not about some futile attempt to remove all doubt from your mind and be 100% convinced God will give you what you ask for. This is what gets you off the waves of wavering. Those who are double minded don't trust that God will keep His promise and they keep crashing around the waves. Ephesians 4:11-15 – our spiritual teachers and leaders are there to supply us with wisdom so that we don't get tossed about in the depths of deceit and doubt. Wisdom isn't just about the moment, but about the movement. You can have success but not be able to handle success. Unstable people will take God's wisdom and twist it (2 Peter 3:15-18).

The preventive aftercare: *Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.* A life touched by grace works itself out in faithfulness. Not all sickness is due to personal sin, but apparently this man's infirmity had been brought about by the sinful choices in his life. If we are often sliding back into familiar sin we should expect to suffer the consequences of carelessness. What good is it for Jesus to heal us if we are going right back to dancing with the devil and playing with the fire that burned us before (2 Peter 2:19-22)? Are you willing to go forward with Jesus, if freedom means you can't go back?

See you are well, you've been to the well don't go back to the pool. It is easier to serve God if there is no ongoing command to follow, we just get our fix and are on our merry way, but if there is a call, then it keeps coming back to us, and now instead of looking for pools of prosperity, we find wells of wisdom. Follow the Divine Doctor's orders. Why go back to the pool of pain?

This man was not the cause of his own healing, and we are not the cause of our own salvation – we are incapable, Jesus comes to us with grace, we respond with faith, and He guides us into everlasting truth. Do you recognize your need for grace? Will you receive that grace? Will you walk in that grace (Ephesians 2:8-10)? Are you willing to keep walking? You have a choice. God made His choice to come on over to reveal Himself to you. Now you have a choice if you want to keep walking His way or go back and suffer the consequences.

For the unbeliever, the question is, which path are you going to travel on, redemption road or damnation drive?

For the believer, the question is, will you go back to doubt and deceit or move onto direction and deliverance?

Do you want your failures to fill you with frustration and fear without God, or to draw you to faith and fellowship with God?