

Mountain View 20 — Healing Our Brokenness

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Passages	John 5:1-17
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Introduction (Connection):

[Invite to John 5]

I'm am grateful to be with you all again that we get to get after Jesus together!

Tension:

Last Sunday we ended John 4 with a look at the story of this Father who sought Jesus out to heal his mortally ill sun.

We looked at the experience of the father and how, being a man in a lofty position of power, connection, and influence, he is brought low to experience something we called a universal human experience.

Powerlessness

Live long enough in this world and you'll feel it:

— Powerless to turn off those red and blue lights chasing behind you...

— Powerless to sway the ref's terrible call on that crucial play as you yell at him through the TV, as if that's going to do something.

Or more seriously...

— Powerless to bring back your child from the dead

— Powerless to cut the bad habit

Either way, we all experience it... but have you ever stopped to analyze how you respond to it?

Think about it; what do you naturally do when you feel powerless?

Me, I recluse back, I hide away, and I distract myself from having to even think about my powerlessness.

Some of you blame other people for your powerlessness.

Others of you amp up your own power, go beast mode, attempt to gain control of everything, and fix it on your own.

And still others of you look for things in this world to be a quick fix.

Today we're coming to a Jesus story that shows how one man was powerless to fix his deep brokenness and how he responded to it

Exposition:

You'll notice, as we're reading this, that there seems to be two parts to this story; we're going to cover part one this week and look deeper into part two next week.

John 5:1-17 — "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 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."¹

Jesus was in Galilee, and because of a Jewish feast, Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem.

In the Northern Wall of the city close to the east was a small little opening called the Sheep Gate, something even the book of Nehemiah referred to.²

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 5:1–17.

² Nehemiah 3:1, 31; 12:39

By this little opening in the wall was these two pools surrounded by four covered colonnades that made a rough trapezoid, with a fifth colonnade separating the two pools.³

What's crazy is you can go see the excavation of these two pools today.

It is located near the Church of St Anne, and they've been working on it for over a century.

This pool was called **Bethesda**, which in Hebrew means "house of outpouring."⁴

Sounds like a pretty hopping place, right? Sounds like a trendy new church name.

Not really... this wasn't the place where the rich and influential people gathered.

This is where a multitude of disabled and diseased invalids gather to find shelter; the blind, the lame, the paralyzed, all under one roof.

I don't know if you and I have the ability to relate to this.

Go to LA and walk through Skid Row and you may see something similar to this, where tents of the homeless line entire city blocks, where the mentally disabled and physically disabled, addicts and prostitutes, and the extreme poor call home.

The house of outpouring is a house of poverty and great need, and they're all gathered there for a reason.

³ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 242.

⁴ Ibid., 241.

I don't know if you saw this but try to find verse 4... can you see it?

Unless you're rocking the KJV, your bible won't have a v. 4 because the oldest and more reliable manuscripts don't include what v. 4 says, which you may find in your footnote.

Apparently, there was this superstition that isn't even attested to in any other literature at the time, just in this gloss footnote added in afterwards, that said the pool would stir sometimes, and that meant an angel was stirring the waters and whoever got in first would be healed of their disease.

Now, these pools were fed by large reservoirs and even intermittent springs which caused the water to stir, and it had a red hue which was thought to be medicinal.⁵

However, how the pool worked isn't the point of the story. There's another.

Among this multitude of the diseased and debilitated lay one single man, and the story hones in on him.

He's been among the invalid for 38 years.

His illness or debility isn't named, but we know that in v. 7 he says someone has to pick him up to move him, so most likely he is paralyzed...

...For 38 years.

And such extreme disability can lead to pretty deep depression and negativity, which apparently this guy had.

⁵ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 242.

He blames others for his problems in v. 7, he throws Jesus under the bus in v. 11, after Jesus heals him he doesn't even care to know Jesus' name in v. 13, and once he finds that out he reports Jesus to the authorities knowing they were looking for Jesus with hostility in v. 15.

But Jesus goes right to this man! Think about that too for a second.

Jesus went to Jerusalem; he could have spent his time rolling with the high-ballers and leaders, people who were clean and put together.

Instead he goes to the place no one else wanted to go; he goes to Skid Row. He heads to the areas of brokenness and rejection.

You see, Jesus always moves towards need, not comfort.

He moves towards broken and brokenhearted sinners, not the self-righteous.

And in this passage we see three attributes of Jesus.⁶

First, **Jesus' knowledge**.

He knew exactly that this man had been laying there for years, he knew exactly why this man had been there, he knew what this man was believing, what this man was wanting, and what this man really needed in his deep brokenness.

Isn't it so sweet to know Jesus who knows you perfectly?

⁶ Three attributes from John Piper, "Healed for the Sake of Holiness" (sermon, Desiring God, August 23, 2009), available online at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/healed-for-the-sake-of-holiness> [accessed online November 16, 2019].

Like, how many times have you walked in here and that person has forgotten your name and they awkwardly wait for you to introduce yourself for someone else so they can just catch your name?

That's broken humanity...

Or more seriously, how desperately do you want someone to be able to see exactly what you're dealing with and your feelings of hopelessness and actually want to move toward that rather than run away.

When you've got a friend in Jesus, you find someone who perfectly knows you, inside and out, past, present, future... even your debilities.

Even those areas where you are weak and broken, and by that I don't mean heartbroken...

I mean where things aren't functioning right—physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally...

He knows exactly what's broken in you and he doesn't run away, he moves to, which is where we see...

Jesus' compassion

Jesus asks a question that signifies his whole ministry and the kingdom of God...

"Do you want to be healed?"

Don't psychologize this question to mean that in order for you to be healed you have to want it first... that's not the point of this question.

It's kind of an obvious question though, isn't it?

This guy is paralyzed, laying on the floor, waiting by a pool where the superstition is that you can be healed if you get in after an angel wing stirs the waters.

Yea, I think he wants to be healed; so why ask?

A few reasons, I think. First, it shows Jesus is moved by the misery of this man, that he walks in empathy.

He compassionately identifies his deep brokenness.

And I think there's a second reason: because Jesus identifies this man's response to the universal human experience... powerlessness.

This man's response to Jesus' question shows how he has responded to his own powerlessness.

v. 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.'"

This guy was trying to take control of his situation of powerlessness with a superstition.

He has this deep brokenness and he thinks he can fix it with a pool, some stirred water, an angel, and a superstition.

Now, I don't know if too many of us are looking for a superstition to fix where we've got debilities and brokenness, but a good chunk of us are looking at something to fix us.

You see, we all have debilities, both inside and out, areas where we're broken and not functioning right, maybe because of something we've done or something done to us, or maybe something we didn't have.

For example, last week I was literally closing the deal on a great truck and I wanted to make sure I was doing the right thing, so I called three people: first, my dad, my father-in-law, and then my wife.

After I got off the phone, I found out someone texted in and bought it out from under me...

After all that, I was looking back on that so humbled and grateful that I've got two incredibly godly and wise men who both have Father in their title, whether its my own dad or my father-in-law.

Some of you don't have that... some of you haven't had that for a really, really long time...

That's not how God designed the world to be, that's an area of brokenness, and Jesus knows it and he's moved by the misery you've felt because of it.

Or maybe you can't seem to get over your addictions, or you can't seem to get out of this poor relationship and you feel powerless.

These are areas of brokenness from the fracture in the fabric of humanity caused by the fall of mankind in Genesis 3.

And what we're so prone to do and what too many things tell us to do is look for fixes in the world around us.

So to kick your porn addiction, you depend on computer blocks and accountability partners...

To replace your need for a father figure you look to people to fill the void expecting it'll work or try counseling...

Here's mine: to stop wasting so much time on my phone I depend on screen time limits to keep me off my phone.

But that's the problem though, and I think that Jesus is compassionately calling this out for us today:

Nothing worldly can fix our brokenness

We think this next book by this author is going to fix my deep grief, or we try new a new therapy practice of rubbing our ears and saying "Woosahhh" is going to help us when we get angry.

We too easily depend on created things to fix where we're most broken.

Jesus calls that out here, "Quit looking to the pool for your healing, look to me."

And in vs. 8-9 we see a third attribute of Jesus...

Jesus' Power

v. 8-9 — "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."

Jesus literally, with no medicine, no surgery, no physical therapy, made a paralyzed man immediately walk upon his miraculous treatment.

Jesus can fix our brokenness!

Jesus can turn back the effects of the fall and make them untrue!

You see, when you rest in and rely on Jesus to fix your brokenness, you're resting in the one who is not powerless and will never be powerless.

In fact, in your brokenness and powerlessness, you are turning to the one who is all-powerful and has all power over all brokenness.

Jesus has just healed this man, turned back the brokenness of the fall, ushered in kingdom life... But Jesus isn't done with this man yet.

Conflict enters in at v. 9, which we'll focus in on next week, so skip down to v 14.

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.’”

Jesus seeks out this man again and he does something that won't make him very popular with some people...

He connects sin to brokenness, or specifically here, he connects sin to sickness.

Now, first, John 9 clearly shows that there is sickness that isn't because of sin, but that God be glorified.

However, in this case here, something in this man's life that was sinful was connected to him becoming an invalid.

In other words, there are consequences for sin, and some of those may end up being physical suffering like sickness.

Some instances of suffering are the direct result of specific sin.

So Jesus warns him that he ought stop sinning so nothing worse would happen.

I mean, what could be worse than 38 years an invalid?

Jesus is referring to the final judgement down in v. 29, which of course would be worse for sinners to stand before a holy God.

And this is where I start losing people, right?

Lots of people love to jump on the Jesus train because he's all powerful and can heal our brokenness, but when he calls out areas of brokenness in us like sin no one wants in on that.

You see, when the kingdom of heaven collides with broken humanity, we can have one of two responses:

- 1) Say Yes, Jesus, have your way, I want to be healed of everything broken...
or
- 2) We can keep trying to fix ourselves with our handmade worldly tools thinking they'll be enough, never finding healing, never finding contentment or joy.

I mean, what if I told you that Jesus' priority is our holiness, not our health?

What if I told you that Jesus may allow your body to fail you so that your holiness will flourish?

This is why people don't follow Jesus, because we want him to heal us to make us more comfortable, but we don't really want him to make us more Christlike.

Conclusion (Cast Vision):

You and I are more broken than we realize; we are more affected by the fall of humanity than we can ever know.

And I praise God that we have a savior who knows us perfectly, loves us compassionately, and can powerfully undo every broken habit, failure, or debility in us.

The question on the table today is, "Do you want to be healed?"

If so, please com pray with us after the service.

[Pray]