

DO YOU WANT TO GET WELL?

John 5:1-16



SYNOPSIS

In healing the invalid at Bethesda, Jesus commits a Sabbath "violation". Here, John begins his account of the religious leaders' antagonism toward Jesus that builds until the crucifixion. Jesus asks, "Do you want to get well?" Depending on our hearts, we might not answer "yes" to this loaded question.



OUTLINE

1

"DO YOU WANT TO GET WELL?"

Bethesda was a sacred site for healing. An invalid who had been there 38 years likely had some psychology about his continued stay at the pool. Of all the questions Jesus could have asked, the invalid likely would have said "yes" if Jesus had offered help. However, Jesus takes the focus off of the invalid's environmental brokenness and asks to check 1) whether the invalid had any faith left for healing, and 2) whether he wanted to start the process of transformation. Jesus asks us the same question. Regardless of the brokenness around you, do you want to become like Christ?

2

DO YOU WANT TO BE FREE FROM LEGALISM?

John highlights Jesus again as divinely able to exercise power through his spoken word. Jesus did for the invalid what the pool could not do. In saying "get up", Jesus resurrected everything in the man's life: his health, his potential to rejoin society, his choice of where/how to live. The man was free to live a new, resurrected reality. Being so close to Jerusalem, he likely was not ignorant about Sabbath regulations, but for a brief moment, he was no longer physically paralyzed nor paralyzed by the religiosity of the city. As we practice the Sabbath, may we be like this mat-carrying healed man: We don't have all the answers, but we're obeying to the best of our knowledge/ability.

3

DO YOU WANT TO BE FREE FROM SIN?

Though he obeyed, there must have been some paralysis in the man's soul that kept him from experiencing gratitude toward his Healer. Not only so, but when questioned by the Jewish leaders, the man "blamed" Jesus for his Sabbath violation. Similarly, the Pharisees completely overlooked the healing miracle and fixated on the Sabbath "sin". In his second encounter with the man, Jesus said, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." (v14) Jesus had set the man free to live a resurrected life. He warned the man to maintain his freedom and not be ensnared by a distorted gospel that would render him either pharisaical or permissive in his lifestyle. Perhaps sin contributed to the man's initial paralysis. Living free means living a gospel tension: "We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." (Tim Keller) Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are able to respond without despair to Jesus's underlying question to us: Do you want the transformative power of the Holy Spirit to work in your heart?



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Does the brokenness of others affect your desire to be healed/transformed? If yes, how?

2

Do you focus on the "rules" (what can/can't do) over just following what Jesus says (and figuring it out as you go)?

3

Which do you need more: to be convicted of your sinfulness/flaws or of your belovedness/acceptance in Jesus?

4

What does being free from sin (i.e. choosing neither legalism nor permissiveness) look like in your life?

5

In all the ways Jesus means, do you want to get well?



BIG IDEA

Not just at conversion, but throughout our lives, Jesus continually asks us to reconfirm: Do you want the transformative power of the Holy Spirit to work in you? Regardless what the consequences are to our answer, we must acknowledge that transformation must begin with a desire to be transformed. Wellness begins with a desire and hope to get well.

