

Book of John #7

John 5: Do You Want to be Healed?

Eric Lewis & Eric Cepin

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Eric Cepin:

We are in the Gospel of John which I'm super excited to talk about because it's such a unique and fun story. Someone once said John was their favorite book because it constantly lifts Jesus up as deity. Be reminded from **John 20** that John was written *so that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name*. In this book, there are seven signs; so far, we have covered three:

1. Water into wine (John 3)
2. Healing of the official's son (John 4)
3. (Today) Healing at the pool of Bethesda (John 5)

John shows us these signs so that we might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the king, and God, and that if you believe you will have LIFE. Without Jesus, there is no life. When you believe, you move from being a non-animated zombie to someone with life in the kingdom of God. Grab ahold of this more and more.



The photo below shows Russ and Emily. They are the first wedding I ever did. I have known them since they were 19 and 20. I gave a very long (hour-long) sermon at their wedding; I even had to sit down in the middle. Russ was in the college ministry long ago: he used to tell dramatic stories from the Old Testament and then I would get up and speak about them. I loved the way he told these stories. We planted this church and he even named his son after me!

This is Eric Lewis as a child; Recently, he has been interning with me and working through different practices in ministry. Today he will speak on the first section of this sermon.



Eric Lewis:

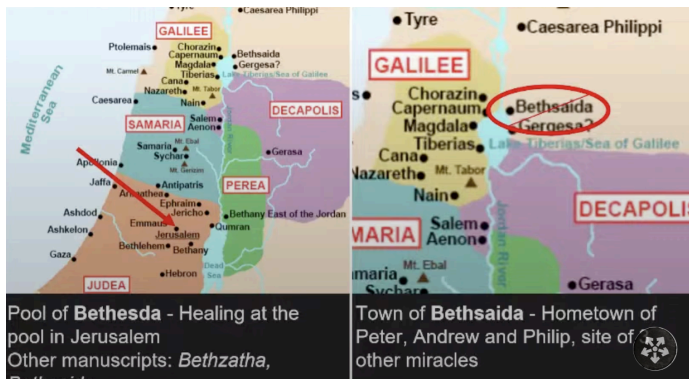
Do you want to be healed?

In my life, many times the answer is “no.” For example, I know the due dates for my homework but I give into laziness and procrastination and put the homework off rather than love my family and give time for them. I’d like to ask all of you this question as well!

John 5:1-15

1 After this there was a feast (maybe Passover or Pentecost; it’s unclear) 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 paralysed.



Note: This healing pool is called Bethesda and is distinguished from Bethsaida, the hometown of some of the disciples. These can be confused. Bethesda means house of mercy or grace or house of olives.

4 (*This verse not in the oldest manuscripts*) For an angel went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water. Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

This was probably added to later manuscripts after the original gospel was written. These minor differences do not conflict in terms of doctrine or our identity in Christ. The main point of the verse is that people are sometimes healed when they went into this pool.

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?”

Jesus probably knelt down and got to know this man before asking him what was probably considered a question with a very obvious answer. The man offers him an excuse

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.”

Jesus has compassion on our pain and wants to heal us. But is primarily concerned with our spiritual sickness. This man has built a habitual lifestyle around being an invalid. He probably begs for what he needs; he is comfortable even though he is sick.

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.

I think it is interesting he was healed on a Sabbath, a day of rest and drawing closer to God. Now he must ask, “Who will I be now?” His old life won’t work: he must develop a new community with a new heart. He has to rethink a lot of parts of his life.

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’?”

In the OT, one commandment said to honor the sabbath: what did that mean? Jer 17:22

Jer 17:22 And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath or do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers.

The religious leaders took this instruction and made it very specific, 39 different ways this law should be carried out. This man could actually have been stoned to death for breaking these laws.

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** Afterwards 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.

Jesus is not threatening him but is deeply concerned with our sin: he doesn’t want to shame us but transform us. He loves us and wants us to love others like this. Jesus looked past his accusers and heals them anyways. But he leaves us with this question: “Do you want to be healed.”

Eric Cepin

Surrender

Eric asks a good and interesting question: do you want to be healed? I am struck that in John **John 5:8**, **Then Jesus said to him, Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.**” When I hear “mat” I think about a sleeping bag. But it was most likely his bed, the place where he lived for 38 years.

Dismantle

There is a dismantling of his pallet (his old life) and learn to walk in a new identity.

Jesus is inviting him to be a disciple! Jesus is starting a revolution and by doing this on the Sabbath, it caused many problems. But he is saying this to you, “Do you want to get up, dismantle your pallet, and give up your control?” The healing a lot of times has to do with our bodies: we want that and this is what we think of first. However, in a fallen world, surrendering to the power of God in your life is also important. To find these, ask **“what are you trying to control to make your life work?”** It may be physical, emotional, addictions. Do you want to let go?

Follow

Picking up your mat represents your mobility. Jesus is saying, if you want to surrender to me, you have to give up what makes you secure and follow Jesus. The invalid man will now have to live a very different life. He probably longed to be a part of his family and community.

The Invitation

What does it mean to follow Jesus in this context? What might Jesus be inviting us into?

The invitation to each of us and as a community:

1. Receive and Believe

John 1:12: Yet to all who did **receive** him, to those who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

The first part of the invitation is saying I want to be well is saying that I am not in control. Children are like this: we are invited to receive and trust that he is good.

2. Sacrifice

John 1:43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, **“Follow me.”**

My guess is that Philip is comfortable in Galilee. When Jesus says follow me, he is inviting Philip to move into an unknown space. He is asking him to follow him, trust him into uncertainty. This involves sacrifice.

3. Worship in Spirit and Truth

John 4:23. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worship the Father seeks.

When Jesus asks about healing, he makes a direct connection with healing and what we worship. He is saying to the woman (above), ***“Do you want to center your life around me in every way or do you want to have some other things to worship as well?”***

4. Embrace Revival and Transformation

These WILL make you a witness! As a follower of Jesus, you will be a witness because Jesus will change you.

John 4:28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, **29 Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.** Could this be the Messiah? **30** They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

The Samaritan woman was the first evangelist. Answering, “Do you want to be healed?” also means, “Do you want to be a witness” and accept the revival that will happen in you?

5. Expect Adversity and Displacement:

John 5:12 So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

The man is so excited that he can *finally* worship in the temple! But the community he longs to be with tells him he cannot be with them. Now he has no one! Following Jesus is about **displacement**. Jesus is abrasive: he asks for a sacrifice, a witness.

Do you want to be healed? With that, let’s go back to the last part where Jesus finds the man:

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** Afterwards 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.

Sin is a sickness. Jesus knows the man will sin. The colonnades (where the pool is) are also gates for the sheep to feed. Jesus is saying that if the man doesn’t surrender and dismantle his mat, he will end up back in his old place permanently. This should scare us: I would like to be in control of things.

A story from my life: Once I was preaching at a church and I had a splitting headache. Russ prayed for me: When he laid hands on me, I felt tingling from the top of my head through my body. Every pain I had was going away: I said to myself, “I’m being healed: this cannot be happening. I am not in control.” And at once, the headache returned. I was really saying, “I don’t want to get up because I will be **OUT OF CONTROL.**” This really boils down to DO you want to relinquish your control? Will you trust and follow me?