

(S) Metro John 5:1-15 Game Changer

(Sx2) Read 5:1-15 - PRAY

Donavan State Penitentiary, in south SD county, is not a place you want to find yourself. That is unless Jesus is there. Prisoners know they're in prison. This man knew he had a disability. And at some point in time, if we're honest with ourselves and stop masking or making excuses for our condition, our own desperation for mercy will be met by God's grace in the face of Jesus Christ. Humanity faces two significant challenges in the spiritual realm: either they don't recognize that they are sick or do and do not want to be cured (Walvoord & Zuck, 1983).

(S) Game Changer - Jesus picks up where the world leaves off

(S) *"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* - 2 Cor. 4:6

v.1 Context back "up in Jerusalem" (always up to Jerusalem - can't wait to go one day). Feast of the Jews: Unclear, which feast, probably one of the major three feasts (Passover, Pentecost, or Purim). If Passover, four can be dated to Jesus' ministry of approximately 3.5 yrs. Jesus' strategic timing - how? He was a man on a mission - "He always lived to do the will of the Father." (Jn.6:38)

v.2 Set scene - location (The Chosen episode) Archeologists have excavated a pool just north of the temple area with five porches, just as John said. Bethesda means "House of Mercy."

v.3 "Lay a multitude of invalids - blind, lame, and paralyzed." A picture of our present condition as a world.

v.4-5 Every individual has a story, and each story includes an invalid portion of the tale. Thirty-eight years - no short amount of time. Come to terms with his condition yet still live in hope. "If I'm going to be invalid, let me be an invalid postured toward hope."

Some manuscripts insert, "For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had." *Metropolis Rec Time - Musical Rings - Rochambau for it!

(S) If there were people genuinely healed by the waters of the Pool of Bethesda, it wouldn't be the first of the many unusual healing occasions in the Bible.

- Some were healed by a purified pot of stew ([2 Kings 4:38-41](#))
- Naaman was healed by washing in the Jordan River ([2 Kings 5:10-14](#))
- One was healed by touching the bones of Elisha ([2 Kings 13:20-21](#))
- Some were healed when the shadow of Peter fell upon them ([Acts 5:14-16](#))
- Some were healed when Paul's handkerchiefs were laid upon them ([Acts 19:11-12](#))

God can do things in unexpected ways, but it doesn't necessarily mean it is from God just because it's unexpected or unusual. (Guzik)

v.6 Jesus sees the individual, knows his condition, and asks: “Do you want to be healed?” Nothing too supernatural yet. However, the question is more than a rhetorical one. Jesus is engaging the man in a relationship that will require trust and faith.

Notice he doesn’t come to those closest to the pool, those with the advantage, the leading edge, but the nameless man in the back.

Personal Testimony - Decision Point

“You’re lame... but I still make lame men walk.”

“If you think you have a better plan for your life, you’re wrong.”

Rationale: If even half of God’s promises are true, it’s better than my plan. What was my plan again? To be cool. I’m so lame. 15 yrs. old never looked back. Only forward with Jesus!

v.7 It seems like a rhetorical question, but it’s an invitation to a relationship with Jesus himself. In God’s economy, a relationship with the Healer is always greater than the healing itself. Consider this, every man, woman, and child Jesus healed, even raised from the dead, still physically died at some later point, even Lazarus.

Jesus’ question communicates care.

Many needy people were there, yet none of them looked to Jesus. “A blindness had come over these people at the pool; there they were, and there was Christ, who could heal them, but not a single one of them sought him. Their eyes were fixed on the water, expecting it to be troubled; they were so taken up with their own chosen way that the true way was neglected.” (Spurgeon)

(S) Spurgeon pictured the multitude waiting around the waters of the Pool of Bethesda, all of them waiting – instead of looking to Jesus. He thought of how foolish this waiting is for many people.

- Some wait for a more convenient season
- Some wait for dreams and visions
- Some wait for signs and wonders
- Some wait to be compelled
- Some wait for a revival
- Some wait for particular feelings
- Some wait for a celebrity (Guzik)

Notice that even though this man may have thought, “If I’m going to be invalid, then at least let me be an invalid postured toward hope,” he was frustrated at its futility. He didn’t lack the desire; he simply stated that he lacked the means.

God is a gentleman. While He refuses to be substituted, He won’t force anyone into a relationship with Himself. So instead, we exhaust ourselves, or the world exhausts us, or both. And it’s at this point Jesus asks us the question, “Do you want to be healed?” Like this man, I’m

sure we'll explain to Jesus the futility of it all, how our situation is hopeless, but how we continue to hold onto the hope for healing one day.

Dana Walling - Kiroos at Donavan State Penetentary shared this passage. Prisoners know they're in prison. This man knew he had a disability. And at some point in time, if we're honest with ourselves and stop masking and/or making excuses for our condition, our own desperation for mercy will be met by God's grace.

(S) **“Every day, find out what you can do with Jesus and do it.”** Not *for* or *to* but *with* Jesus!

(S) v.8 Game Changer - Jesus picks up where the world leaves off

The man is an interesting study of hope and hopelessness. In his mind, there was only one way a miracle could work, “be first in or be left out.” Sound familiar? How else does one approach the impossible?

(S) “He healed the man beside the pool, but without his touching the pool, to show that He could heal without the water.” (Trench). “Jesus wasn’t interested in making this man more competitive; He was looking to take him out of the competition *and change the game forever.*” (Courson)

“With God, all things are possible - do you believe this?” Jesus asks Martha at Lazarus’ tomb (Jn 11).

v.9 Man responds immediately. The man’s ear heard the command, his brain sent an electric pulse to the long dead nervous system, and his atrophied body obeyed. Healed, he took up his bed and walked!

Isaiah foretold that in Messiah’s day, the lame would “leap like deer.” (Is. 35:1-7).

(S) “God, I believe, please help my unbelief...” (Mk 9:24) - **Our honesty**

“Even when we’re faithless, He remains faithful because He cannot deny Himself.” (2 Tim. 2:13) - **God’s Character**

“His strength is made perfect in our weakness!” (2 Cor. 12:9) **Our new reality**

Jesus simply tells the man to do what he could not do. Jesus uncomplicates the impossible - faith has a revealing and focusing effect. What was impossible for this man was possible for Jesus. What the world promised but always cut short is fulfilled totally in Jesus. When people obey, God works in and through His word! **The man didn’t need another man to help him; he needed the Son of Man, Jesus, to save him!**

v.10-13 Sabbath Controversy

One of the greatest tragedies is someone can be in the presence of miracles and completely miss them (rejoicing for others, experiencing them personally, and praising God in response). How? Why? Instead of rejoicing, experiencing, or praising, healing on a particular day did not fit the religious leaders’ self-imposed construct. Sabbath was made for man, not man for the

sabbath (Mk. 2:27). Sadly, the fact a man could now praise and enjoy God more than he ever could, at least for the last 38 yrs, is sucked into controversy.

Notice that the Jewish leaders didn't want to know who healed the disabled man. Instead, they wanted to know who told him to carry a bed-mat on the Sabbath day. Warped the game was.

If Satan can't keep you from being saved, pictured here as picking up our beds and walking, he will try to keep you from enjoying God and being effective for God. One proven tool is legalism, arguments over words and practices, which go beyond the essentials and find basis in human opinion or philosophical framework. To my understanding of scripture, Jesus of the Gospels, and in my experience of Him at work in my own life, Jesus loves breaking out of the nice tight boxes we put him in.

(S) To the religious leaders, Jesus was *the man who broke the Sabbath*. To the healed man, Jesus was *He who made me well* (Guzik).

v.14-15 All this, and the man didn't even know it was Jesus who healed him. Jesus found the man to emphasize spiritual healing over physical healing. Yes, physical healing is of great value, but spiritual healing is of eternal importance.

"What would a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mk 8:37)

As invalids, we too were stuck in sin, but our disabilities may also provide opportunities as well. Now that you have all your working members, use them to glorify God, not as instruments of sin. "Cut it off..." (Mt 5:30).

Jesus picks up where the world leaves off

Communion Gospel

- Realize you are a sinner
- Recognize what Christ has done for you
- Repent of your sin and turn to him
- Receive the gift of life

Call Richard/Calin to share an application thought.

Prayer