

SERIES: "It's More Like Falling in Love"

SERMON: "Do You Want to Get Well?"

SCRIPTURE: John 5:1-15 (Healing at the Pool of Bethesda)

WED. BLURB:

"Do you want to get well?" This Sunday, we'll hear Jesus ask this question to a man who was sick for 38 years! Seems like kind of a dumb question, right? But Jesus was asking the man if he still had his inner longing for a better life, and, even after all the hardships and barriers constantly in his life, if he still had his dreams. It's a question Jesus asks of us, too. Don't miss this Sunday when we will hear Jesus ask us, "Do you want to get well?"

GATHERING SONG: Sanctify

GREETING: David

WORSHIP SET: Sanctify

WORSHIP PRAYER: Andrew Buschena

Kids Go to Kids' Church: Andrew Bonsell

MISSION MOMENT: Jeff Krasean and Palawan Project

PRAYER: Amelia/Andrew Buschena?

LOVE MOMENT: Amelia Buschena

OFFERING: Kelsey Sarver

**VIDEO INTRO:** Clip from music video, "It's More Like Falling in Love" Jason Gray, artist.

**PP#1:** "It's More Like Falling in Love"

"Do You Want to Get Well?"

"When Jesus saw the sick man lying there, knowing that he had already been there a long time, He asked him, 'Do you want to get well?'" - John 5:6

"It's More Like Falling in Love." "Do You Want to Get Well?" John 5:6 "When Jesus saw the sick man lying there, knowing that he had already been there a long time, He asked him, 'Do you want to get well?'"

What a weird question. There's no such thing as a dumb question, right? But this question seems to get close. Why would anyone ever say "No, I *don't* want to get well"?

**PP#2:** *Image for waiting/wanting to get well at a typical modern clinic.*

Let's say you're coughing a lot, for a couple of weeks now. You finally go to the clinic to see a doctor. He does a thorough examination, swabs your throat, and comes into the room. "Well, David, I see from the test that you have strep throat. Tell me, do you want to get well?"

"No thanks, Doc. I just wanted to know what I had. Thanks for the diagnosis. No antibiotics, please. I'll just be on my way. I'll clear my schedule for the next couple of weeks so I can recover very slowly and miserably."

Of course I want to be made well! That's why I'm here! Why would anyone NOT want to get well! All the more true for a chronic or even terminal illness, right?

Well, Jesus asks this, what we might think is a borderline dumb question. And the situation makes it seem even more ridiculous.

John 5, starting with verse 1.

**PP#3: John 5:1-15**

1 After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate in the north city wall is a pool with the Aramaic name Bethesda. It had five covered porches, 3 and a crowd of people who were sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed sat there [waiting for the water to move. 4 Sometimes an angel would come down to the pool and stir up the water. Then the first one going into the water after it had been stirred up was cured of any sickness.]

John 5, verse 1 “After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate in the north city wall is a pool with the Aramaic name Bethesda. It had five covered porches, and a crowd of people who were sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed sat there [waiting for the water to move. Sometimes an angel would come down to the pool and stir up the water. Then the first one going into the water after it had been stirred up was cured of any sickness.]”

**PP#4: *Arial image of Jerusalem, with the Pool of Bethesda near the Sheep Gate.***

Jesus had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate a religious holiday at the Temple. You know, during these weeks before Easter, we’re following Jesus around. We’re watching, we’re listening, we’re traveling with Him. We’re joining the crowd around Jesus, seeing Him like His first disciples did. They spent time with Him, walked with Him, ate with Him. And they fell in love with Him. We want to fall in love with Jesus, too. So, we’re spending time with Him, watching Him, traveling with Him, being near Him. And as we do, our connection with Jesus becomes a love-relationship.

**PP#5: *An image of what the Pool of Bethesda may have looked like, perhaps w/lots of sick people.***

So, we travel with Jesus to Jerusalem. It’s still early in His public ministry, perhaps the first of His three years. We keep up as He leaves the Temple and head over to the famous Pool of Bethesda, also translated Bethesda, near the Sheep Gate along the north city wall. We’ve heard about this place. It’s where people with chronic illnesses and handicaps go. There’s a lot of them! There are five covered colonnades, supported by columns, around the central pool, and it’s packed with people in need, and those who are with them.

**PP#6: John 5:3-4**

3 and a crowd of people who were sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed sat there [waiting for the water to move. 4 Sometimes an angel would come down to the pool and stir up the water. Then the first one going into the water after it had been stirred up was cured of any sickness.\*]

*\*Critical editions of the Greek New Testament do not include this addition.*

Now, if you notice in your Bibles, there’s something confusing here. Some Bibles include extra words in verse three, as well as a verse four, and some versions omit it. This comes from an issue called textual variance. You see, no original books of the Bibles survive. But there are hundreds of surviving copies dating from the first few centuries. The earliest and most reliable copies don’t include these words. Yet, by AD 400, it’s included in all future copies.

Now, if you look at what these words say, you see that they explain the significance of the Pool of Bethesda and why sick and lame people would go there. What probably happened is that

these words weren't included in John's original Gospel, because those people knew the local stories about the pool. Yet, as the Gospel of John got copied and distributed to other locations, those people didn't understand about the pool. So, most likely, at some point a translator added a side note along the margin explaining how according to local legend, the pool was believed to be stirred by angels from time to time, perhaps they bathed there, and whenever the water mysteriously stirred, the first person in the pool was reputed to be healed. Evidently some angel residue was left behind, and it healed people. At least that's what was believed.

Well, as copying continued, the note was so helpful that it seems some copyists simply inserted the explanation right within the text, for clarification sake. Hence the variations in the manuscripts, and our Bibles today.

So, although these words probably weren't from John, I'm glad to have them. I wouldn't understand why sick people would go there, otherwise. This phenomenon is not mentioned in any other ancient text, so that seems to suggest that the miraculous healings only occurred for a short period of time, right around the time of Jesus, and historical writers didn't seem to think it had enough credibility to mention it. What we do know is that this pool was used to supply the water for the Temple, and therefore, it was considered a bit more holy than other pools.

**PP#7:** *Image of Jesus and followers addressing the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda.*

Yet, there were throngs of people who came in hope, filling the courtyards.

It's the Sabbath day, and we're with Jesus as He leaves the Temple. We follow Him north, to the Pool of Bethesda. We see all the people lying around, waiting for the water to ripple. Jesus goes up to a man who had been sick for 38 years. That could very well have been the majority of his life! We don't know what his illness was, but we find out that it made him unable to get himself into the water. Somehow he had gotten near the pool, but he had been by the pool for a long time.

What a contrast from what we saw last week! Last week we were with Jesus along with crowds of people in a home. A lame man had four really great friends who made sure he got to Jesus. But this man seems to have no friends. He's there alone, and he's stuck. When some notice the water stirring, others get into the water before him. Try as he might, it's hopeless.

**PP#8:** John 5:1-15

5 A certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there, knowing that he had already been there a long time, He asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I don't have anyone who can put me in the water when it is stirred up. When I'm trying to get to it, someone else has gotten in ahead of me."

Verse 5, "A certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, knowing that he had already been there a long time, He asked him, 'Do you want to get well?' [There's that question!] The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I don't have anyone who can put me in the water when it is stirred up. When I'm trying to get to it, someone else has gotten in ahead of me.'"

He's done all he can, and he's hoping to get some help. But no matter how hard he tries, someone else beats him in.

**PP#9:** *Another image of Jesus talking to the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda.*

So, Jesus picks this man out, walks up to him, and asks him the question, “Do you want to get well?” Now just remember that down in Jerusalem, Jesus is not yet well known, and is not known to be a healer like up in Galilee. So Jesus was a complete stranger to this man. And the man seems to interpret the question as “Why aren’t you healed yet?” In essence, he says, “It’s not because I don’t *want* to, I *can*’t!”

Of all the people there, Jesus seems to have picked this one person out on purpose. He seems to know what this person’s been up against, or at least has been able to size it up accurately. Why would Jesus ask this obvious question? If he didn’t want to get well, why would he even be there?

Well, it doesn’t say why Jesus asked the question. But I do notice that Jesus seems to be working more deeply than what I can see. We’ll see that also in verse 14. But as I watch Jesus in this story, I can’t help but think about that sick man. Imagine, sick for 38 years! Obviously everyone had done all that could have been done to try to help him. And then, finally he gets to the pool, the one last hope he’s got. And that becomes hopeless. When Jesus talks to him, I can only imagine that he has very little hope left, if any. Jesus’ question seems to be asking if he still had any dream left.

### **PP#10: Do You Want to Get Well?**

#### 1. Do you have any dream left?

How about you, you who have overheard Jesus ask a sick man this question. Do you have any dream left? Have you struggled for a long time against a hopeless situation? Have years and years gone by and hardened you? Do you tell yourself, “Why bother!” Have you given up on God? Has He seemed to not come through for you? Is there a pain deep inside that has been sucking away your light? Are you kind of just getting by in the moment, kind of just existing, hoping in something that you’re sure just won’t ever happen?

Jesus seems to be asking these kinds of questions. The man’s last hope is in a pool that he can’t get into, and that was a hope long ago.

We see Jesus go to this pool, surrounded by crowds of people putting their hope in something that at best, they heard might be true. I look at the crowd and I see people putting their hope in a pool, and next to the pool stands the one who actually can heal. We’ve seen it, up in Galilee! And, hang on, here it comes again!

### **PP#11: John 5:1-15**

8 Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 Immediately the man was well, and he picked up his mat and walked. ...

Verse 8, “Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 Immediately the man was well, and he picked up his mat and walked.”

Can you see him, walking with his mat? Look at his face! Can you hear the crowd gasping? Is your heart beating hard in your chest? Amazing!

Jesus just shifted the focus of hope. The man, and all the rest, were focused on the pool. It didn’t work. It didn’t help. He despaired. But then, in walks Jesus, and heals the man!

The man didn’t do anything, even believe anything. All he said was that he was struggling, and that he still had some of his dream left. Jesus, simply out of His compassion, heals him. The man doesn’t even know who Jesus is, or even His name!

The crowd erupts, excitement throughout the pool area, and Jesus quickly slips away. Jesus didn’t go there to heal. He went there to shift the focus. Hope in this place? No, hope *in Him*!

Did you find it curious that Jesus said the man had to pick up and carry the mat he had been lying on for so long? Why not leave it behind? Did He want the man to carry the reminder what he had been healed from? Perhaps, but it also seems Jesus was looking to pick an argument. Verse 9,

**PP#12:** John 5:1-15

9 Immediately the man was well, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

10 The Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It’s the Sabbath; you aren’t allowed to carry your mat.”

11 He answered, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

12 They inquired, “Who is this man who said to you, ‘Pick it up and walk’?” 13 The man who had been cured didn’t know who it was, because Jesus had slipped away from the crowd gathered there.

Verse 9 “Immediately the man was well, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, ‘It’s the Sabbath; you aren’t allowed to carry your mat.’ He answered, ‘The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” They inquired, ‘Who is this man who said to you, ‘Pick it up and walk’?’ The man who had been cured didn’t know who it was, because Jesus had slipped away from the crowd gathered there.”

**PP#13:** *Image of the healed man carrying his mat being questioned by the Jewish leaders.*

Now, I want to think that the Jewish leaders didn’t recognize that it was the sick man who was carrying his mat. But nowhere in the story do they get excited about his healing. The way John tells the story, it seems that they really didn’t care about the healing. They were focused on the illegal mat carrying. The Jewish law, you see, said to do no unnecessary work on the Sabbath. Mat carrying could wait until the next day, according to their laws. But they didn’t ask, “Who is this man who *healed you*?” did they? They asked, “Who is this man who *told you to break the law*?”

Jesus had been to the Temple for a religious festival. But the leaders there seem to have the wrong focus: keep the law to the letter, rather than experiencing the God of the Law. Then Jesus goes to the pool of healing. But the people there seem to be focusing on the water, rather than the God of healing.

Jesus didn’t seem to go to the pool to heal people. After all, he only healed one man, whom Jesus then sent off to get in trouble with the Jewish authorities. He could have healed, but He didn’t. He seems, instead, to be using a physical healing to try to shift the focus onto spiritual healing.

**PP#14:** John 5:1-15

14 Later Jesus found him in the temple and said, “See! You have been made well. Don’t sin anymore in case something worse happens to you.” 15 The man went and proclaimed to the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the man who had made him well.

Verse 14, “Later Jesus found him in the temple and said, ‘See! You have been made well. Don’t sin anymore in case something worse happens to you.’ The man went and proclaimed to the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the man who had made him well.”

Jesus sought him out. Jesus *was looking* for him. The conversation wasn't done. It wasn't just about the physical healing. "See, it's true that you are healed, aren't you!" Jesus said. "You are well. Bodily, yes. But there's more. Stop sinning. Live righteously. Follow God." Remember, in that culture people believed that it was possible that sick and handicapped people suffered punishment for sin. Jesus seems to use that to make a point. Jesus had forgiven him of all his sin! His physical healing was the proof! And the man then goes and tells the Jewish leaders who had made him well. This Jesus seemed to forgive sins, and seems to be above the Law, equal to God. We don't have time, but if you read the next couple of verses, this is precisely what it says.

**PP#15: Do You Want to Get Well?**

1. Do you have any dream left?
2. Where is your hope?

As you spend time with Jesus, can you begin to see Him as your hope? Where do you place your hope? How are we like the sick man, at the end of our rope, and putting our hope in something that's not going to deliver? He waited *for years*, hoping in something that didn't help him. How about you? Are you spending your years hoping in something that won't help...a job, a comfortable financial situation, shallow relationships, meaningless activities? *Do you want to get well?* Not just healthy, but well, *truly well*, from the inside out? Do you dream for a life rich with meaning and purpose? Dream for inner peace that carries you through the current troubles and problems? Dream for joy that puts a spring in your step, no matter how hard the road? Where is your hope?

We see Jesus redirecting hope, away from empty promises to a life of being truly well.

**PP#16: Do You Want to Get Well?**

1. Do you have any dream left?
2. Where is your hope?
3. How are you going to live?

We see Jesus redirecting purpose, from following rules in a hollow, pointless way, to seeking out the God who gave the rules. God gave the rules to help us keep our focus on Him, not to become the focus! We see Jesus shifting the focus from the laws to the God of the laws. How are you going to live? Even religion, which can be so helpful and offer us the structure we so desperately need to develop healthy, holy lives, can take the place of God. How are we going to live: for the rules, or for the God of the rules? It means still following the rules, but the reason why we do, changes. And when it does, the rules and structures become life-giving, not empty. Do you want to *get well*?

**PP#17: Image of a person hugging Jesus, or Jesus with inviting arms, that evokes love for Him.**

Isn't it awesome that Jesus cares enough about people, to rekindle our dreams, to want to redirect our hope, to change our lives? Our Jesus loves us so much, that He seeks us out, and asks to restore our wellness, our whole health, our well-being: physically, mentally, spiritually. This Jesus is incredible! The more I spend time with Him, the more I am complete, restored, whole, made well.

The more I spend time with Him, the more it's like falling in love!

Amen.

CLOSING SONG: "Drops in the Ocean"

BENEDICTION

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEB. 28, 2016

**Winter Series:** “Spiritual Growth”

**Sermon:** “Do You Want to Get Well?”

**Scripture:** John 5:1-15

## Opening prayer

**Introductions:** Share about a struggle you had for many, many years, and now don’t any longer.

**Background:** Skim John 4. What is going on in this chapter?

**Read:** John 5:1-9

1. Verses 1-2. Map: going “up” to Jerusalem. Location of the Temple, the Sheep Gate, north city wall, and Pool of Bethesda. Reconstruction of the pool. Up until the early 1800s, the site of the Pools of Bethesda were not located. Then, archeologists discovered the site. In 1964 it was confirmed as a Byzantine church ruins were found on the site. What role does archeology and historical locations of biblical sites have on your faith?
2. Verses 3-4. Discuss the textual variances of these verses. Does it bother you that these words got added to the biblical text over time? What is their usefulness?
3. Verses 5-6. Why, do you think, Jesus asked the man if he wanted to get well? Wasn’t it obvious?
4. Verses 7-9. Why, do you think, Jesus healed the man?

**Read:** John 5:10-15

5. Verses 9-13. What suggests that the Jewish leaders didn’t care about the man’s healing?
6. Jesus had commanded the man to carry his mat on the Sabbath. Why might Jesus have done that?
7. Verse 14. Jesus sought the man out at the temple. What is the purpose of what Jesus says to him? do you think?
8. Verse 15. What is the end result of the man’s healing?

**Read:** John 5:16-18

9. Verses 16-18. What were the reasons why the Jewish leaders hassled Jesus?
10. Application: What will you take away from this passage? How will you live it out?