

Do you want to be made well?

Central text: John 5:1-15

Verse 1 – *After this there was a feast of the Jews...*

We don't know which of the Jewish feasts this was. However, some old scholars believe that it must have been Pentecost or *Shavuot* in Hebrew (coincidentally today is 'Pentecost Sunday' – it is 50 days after Easter).

There was a feast in Jerusalem

Much like in the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, there would have been multitudes visiting and celebrating, from every nation under heaven. Jews would flock from all parts of the known world to celebrate in Jerusalem.

It must have been a very happy time for everyone in Jerusalem: old friends meeting again, much singing and dancing (like Jews normally do) and no doubt much food involved. The streets were filled with life, joyful sounds and much singing.

Two different multitudes

However, in this same city where multitudes rejoiced and celebrated, there was another multitude gathering.

It is a different gathering, not a joyful one, but of people in pain and suffering.

Verse 2 - *²Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. ³In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralysed, waiting for the moving of the water.*

This is a multitude of people who can't be part of the celebration. This was a multitude of people sick. In the Greek, the word 'sick' here is *astheneia* – *Without strength or power (physically or spiritually).*

Here, it is not the sound of rejoicing and singing that is heard but the sound of groaning.

The passage starts in verse 1 with these words: *After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* We are left with the impression that Jesus goes to Jerusalem to join the feast, but we see that Jesus went to join those who were suffering.

This text shows us 4 very important things:

1. Jesus focused His ministry on those who had needs

Jesus didn't go to the party; He went to the needy. That is where we find Him.

He came because of our needs, the greatest being the salvation of our souls:

Luke 4:18-19 - *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*

He made it clear in this passage that He came for the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, the oppressed – and that includes all of us. He came to turn victims into victors. He came to heal people.

Mark 2:17 - *When Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”*

Healing was at least 1/3 of the ministry of Jesus:

Matthew 4:23-24 - *²³And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.*

Matthew 9:35 - *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

2. Jesus saw the crowds but was also aware of one man’s need

Verse **3** speaks of a *great multitude* but then verse **5** zooms-in on a ‘*certain man*’.

“Now a certain man was here who had an infirmity 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been in that condition a long time, He said to him, do you want to be made well?”

With Jesus you are never a number in the crowd. Jesus knows each one of us individually and He knows our needs.

Psalms 35:13-15 - *He Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. ¹⁴From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; ¹⁵He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.*

Jesus saw him – He saw someone facing the most severe, most unpleasant, worst possible set of circumstances:

- Sick for 38 years (life expectancy in those days was 35)
- No hope of healing (everyone seemed to always get there first and no one helped him. He saw that same pattern for 38 years). He was hopeless and helpless.
- His company were other suffering people – a depressive environment

- Waiting for the move of the angel, waiting for the move of the water... waiting, waiting, waiting 38 years!
- Left behind and marginalised – again and again, year after year. He can't be part of the feast. He can't be in the temple with the crowd. He has to be with this other crowd of sick people.

3. What Jesus does in desperate circumstances

- a) Jesus came into this place known as 'the sheep gate' – not a palace, not the most noble place in the temple but to the very muddy spot where sacrificial lambs were marched into the temple, to remind us in our trials that He is that ultimate 'sacrificial lamb' offered for us - once and for all. In our desperate circumstances let us remember about what the atonement provided for us: by His stripes we were healed.
- b) There were 5 porches – 5 covered walkways supported with columns providing a covering for the sick. 5 is a significant number because the Torah is made up of 5 books. These sick people were under the cover of the Law, but it took grace to heal them and Grace came with Jesus.
The Aramaic word *Bethesda* means 'house of grace', or house of mercy' or 'the place of the outpouring'.
- c) The man had been sick for 38 years. 38 is also a significant number because, according to **Deuteronomy 2:14** it is the exact length of time that Israel wandered in the wilderness. After those days, Moses was told to march into the promise land. That is what Jesus does for us: He moves us from a desert of hopelessness to a promise of healing and blessing. Jesus came to open the way out of hopelessness into wholeness.

He told the man: *"Do you want to be made well?"*

4. Jesus always expects a decision

"do you want to be made well?" Jesus puts the ball in the sick man's court. What is your decision?

Isaiah 1:19 – *"If you are willing and obedient you shall eat the good of the land"*

The man could have answered yes or no, instead he spoke about his problem. sHe had no man, but He had Jesus! Jesus is all we need. More than the move of an angel and the moving of the waters, this man needed the move of Jesus in His life. The next words of Jesus were powerful: *rise take up your bed and walk!*

V.9 – *And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed and walked*

We are believing this year that God will move immediately, instantly and suddenly!

Do you want to be saved? Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be made well?