

DO YOU WANT TO BE MADE WELL?

(John 5:1-9)

Intro: Three guys were fishing in a boat one day.
-Jesus walked across the water.
 #Joined them in the boat.
-After they had recovered from the shock.
 #Watching someone walk on water.
 #Meeting Jesus face to face.

First fisherman got up the nerve to speak.
-“Jesus, my shoulder has been bothering me,”
-“Ever since I got wounded in the war.”
-“I was wondering if there is anything you could do for me.”
Jesus.
-Said:
 #“Sure, no problem!”
-Touched the man’s shoulder.
Man felt no pain for the first time in years.

Second fisherman then got up the nerve to speak.
-“Jesus, I’ve had to wear these thick glasses.”
-“I have a real problem reading and driving.”
-“Could you help me?”
Jesus.
-Said:
 #“Sure, no problem!”
-Took the man’s glasses.
-Tossed them into the lake.
As soon as the glasses hit the water.
-The man could see everything clearly.

When Jesus turned to the third man.
-Third fisherman threw up his hands defensively and cried out:
 #“Don’t touch me!”
 #“I’m on long-term disability.”

I. "Do You Want To Be Made Well?"

A. Jesus Asked A Disabled Man In Our Gospel Lesson.

1. Shouldn't the answer be obvious?
2. Who wouldn't want to be healed?
 - a. This man had suffered for 38 years.
 - b. From some kind of disability.
 - That apparently had made it difficult for him.
 - #Walk.
 - #Walk well.
3. We're not told that he spent all 38 years.
 - a. At the pool.
 - b. Near the Sheep Gate.
 - NE part of Jerusalem.
 - c. Sheep Gate.
 - Where sheep were brought into the city.
 - #For sacrifices at the Temple.
 - d. Pool.
 - Originally to supply water.
 - #Temple.
 - #Temple Mount.
 - Thought to have healing qualities.
 - #Like a therapeutic hot tub.
 - Our Gospel reading is missing.
 - #Last part of verse 3.
 - #Whole of a verse 4.
 - *Which were likely added to the text much later.
 - +Probably in the 4th century.
 - Those verses explained.
 - #When the waters were intermittently stirred up.
 - *Perhaps because of an underground spring.
 - #Stirring was thought to be the work of an angel.
 - #Water was said to cure the first person.
 - *Who stepped into the pool.
 - e. But this disabled man.
 - Apparently spent some amount of time at this pool.
 - #Begging.
 - #Hoping perhaps for a miracle.
4. But his hope seems to have vanished.
 - a. All of the younger whippersnappers beat him into the pool.
 - b. There was no one to help him.
 - No family.
 - No friends.

5. Jesus asked him.
 - a. "Do you want to be made well?"
 - b. John 5:6.
 - Perhaps questioning.
 - #As we might.
 - “In 38 years you haven’t figured out how to be first?”
 - “In 38 years you haven’t found anyone to help you?”
 - “Do you like being on long-term disability?”
 - “Do you like begging?”
 - “Do you really want healing?”
- B. Do You Suppose Jesus Might Ask Us The Same Question?
1. "Do you want to be made well?"
 - a. From whatever ails you.
 - In body.
 - In mind.
 - In spirit.
 - b. Or do we find some value in our infirmities?
 - Something to complain about.
 - Something to elicit sympathy.
 - Something to excuse our shortcomings.
 - Something to keep us dependent.
 - Something to keep us on long-term disability.
 2. I was trying to think this week.
 - a. If Jesus ever healed anyone against their will.
 - I couldn't think of a single instance of that.
 - Maybe you can.
 - b. Jesus cast out some demons.
 - When the demons protested.
 - c. But the people.
 - Came to him in droves.
 - Begged from the roadsides.
 - Had friends lower them through the roof.
 3. Do we really want to be made well?
 - a. Do we want it enough?
 - To stop smoking.
 - To drink less.
 - To change our diet.
 - To exercise more.
 - b. Do we want it enough?
 - To open ourselves to the grace of God.

4. Our Lutheran theology.
 - a. Emphasizes that we are saved by God's grace.
 - It's a gift.
 - We can't:
 - #Earn it.
 - #Buy it.
 - Ephesians 2:8-9.
 - b. But we do have to receive it.
 - In faith.
 - #To accept the gift.
 - Now even faith is God's gift to us.
 - #1 Corinthians 12:3.
 - But it's not a gift that is forced upon us.
 - #Against our will.

II. There Needs To Be An Openness On Our Part To Receive The Gifts That God Offers.

A. Disabled Man Was Able To Receive It.

1. He received it through a word from Jesus.
 - a. Word that was both:
 - Command.
 - Gift.
 - b. "Stand up, take your mat and walk."
 - John 5:8.
 - c. He was made well.
 - d. He walked.
2. Jesus refocused him.
 - a. Took his focus off of:
 - Pool.
 - Needing to be first.
 - Needing someone to help him into the water.
 - b. Put his focus on Jesus:
 - He received the healing that he needed.
 - He received the openness to accept what Jesus was offering.

B. It's Mother's Day.

1. What a blessing are our mothers!
 - a. To give us life.
 - b. To love us.
2. What a blessing are our children!
 - a. Gifts from God.
 - b. Gifts to be loved and cherished.

3. What a blessing when you have a loving relationship!
 - a. Mothers and children.
 - b. Children and parents.
4. Some of you don't have that.
 - a. Relationships are sometimes:
 - Strained.
 - Estranged.
 - b. You can't make them better by yourself.
 - You can speak loving words.
 - You can perform loving acts.
 - #But if they're not received by the other party.
 - #If there is no openness to your words and acts of love.
 - *There is no relationship.
 - *There is no healthy relationship.
5. Sometimes all we can do is pray.
 - a. Pray that relationships will be healed.
 - b. Pray for:
 - Open hearts.
 - Open minds.
 - Open arms.
 - c. That's what we long for.

C. That's What God Longs For.

1. Longs for our hearts to be open to his gifts.
2. For several years my sons shared a bedroom.
 - a. When they were younger.
 - b. In our home in St. Louis.
 - One year I repainted their bedroom.
 - #Baby blue color.
 - *On the walls.
 - #White semi-gloss enamel.
 - *On the woodwork.
 - #It looked really nice.
 - One day my son Joel was marking up the walls.
 - #Either with crayons.
 - #Or with dirty hand prints.
 - *I don't remember any more the exact circumstances.
 - I said:
 - #"Joel, I just painted those walls."
 - #"We want to keep the walls clean."
 - #"We don't want to mess them up if we can help it."
 - To which my three-year-old responded in his cutest voice:
 - #"But we don't want to help it."

3. I think that is a great definition of sin.
 - a. God washes us.
 - b. God cleanses us.
 - c. God forgives us.
 - But when God says:
 - #“Try to stay out of the dirt.”
 - #“We don’t want you getting dirty again if we can help it.”
 - We too often say:
 - #“But we don’t want to help it.”
4. Jesus asks us:
 - a. “Do you want to be made well?”
 - b. “Do you want to be forgiven?”
 - c. “Do you want to live a new life?”
5. Second reading from Revelation 21-22.
 - a. St. John the Divine has a vision.
 - Tree of life.
 - Leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations.
 - #Revelation 22:2.
 - b. Jesus asks:
 - “Do you want it?”
 - “Do you want that life?”
 - “Do you really want healing for the nations?”
6. Then let Jesus refocus you.
 - a. Take your focus off the pool.
 - Needing to be first.
 - Finding people who will help you get what you want.
 - b. Put your focus on the one.
 - Who opens tombs.
 - Who opens eyes.
 - Who opens hearts.
 - Who gives you every good and perfect gift.
 - #James 1:17.

Concl: One of the contemporary songs we sing at our 8:30 service.

-“Open the Eyes of My Heart.”

#Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,

Open the eyes of my heart,

I want to see you,

I want to see you.

#To see you high and lifted up,

Shining in the light of your glory.

Pour out your power and love, as we sing,

“Holy, Holy, Holy.”

Do you want to see?

- Look to the cross.
- Look at the open tomb.
- Come to the altar.
- #Look in your hands.

Here is the healing.

Here is the cleansing.

Here is the new life.

- Do you want it?