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| John 5:1-11 | Jesus Questions:Do you want to get well? | Pinelands – 9am – 09/03/2025 |

A Spanish Priest, working in India, was cycling through the warm Indian countryside when he became aware of a strange stillness in the air.

Nature seemed to have stopped, as if waiting for something to happen.

Sensing danger, he stopped pedalling, got off his bicycle and looked around.

Suddenly he understood the reason for the eerie silence.

In the low grass a cobra stood up with its hood spread and its tongue flicking.

The priest followed the snake’s gaze. It was fixed on a branch, just ahead, where a small bird sat, completely paralysed.

The bird had wings, but could not fly.

It had a voice but could not sing.

It was frozen stiff, mesmerized.

The snake knew his power had cast its spell and his prey could not escape.

The priest decide to intervene…

 He stirred the breeze, waved his arms, shouted at the snake.

 Eventually his effort were successful.

The snake now distracted, reluctantly lowered itself to the ground and slid off into the grass.

The countryside came alive again with its surrounding sounds.

The little bird, freed from it’s Paralysis,

found it’s wings again and flew away to sing another day.

This story is a powerful parable.

Many people today find themselves caught

in the hypnotic gaze of the snake.

Some are immobilised by…

Fear or depression or despair or by some other dark feeling.

Some are trapped in…

Destructive and Addictive patterns of behaviour.

Some feel stuck in their relationships with God,

 And no amount of praying and reading scripture is helping.

As a RESULT… like the little bird…

 Many have become paralysed… longing for a new freedom.

 They have wings… but do not fly.

They have a voice… but do not sing.

If you feel paralysed like that little bird, for whatever reason…

 Then there is ***GOOD NEWS*** for you.

**GOD** wants to FREE you… **GOD** wants you to be free.

***BUT…*** to be FREE we need to be willing to go on a journey.

**A Journey of…** ***CHANGE*** and ***RISK***

We heard the story…

 Jesus came to the pool of Bethesda.

 A place where the sick, the lame, the blind gathered

 All in the hope of a miraculous healing.

 Jesus noticed a paralysed man there…

Been there for 38 years.

***BUT…*** Instead of healing him immediately Jesus asks…

 “Do you want to get well?”

**2 THINGS…** to Notice from this passage of Scripture

**FIRSTLY…**

***TO BE WELL…*** Means things will **CHANGE.**

 Are we prepared for the Change?

Certainly, for the paralytic… To be Well… meant a **HUGE change.**

 At present he… Is dependant on family and Friends

 *(for food, movement, accommodation*

 *To fetch and carry for him, care for him)*

 Did not have to take responsibility for his life.

To be well… He would have to take hold of life again…

 Care for and Work for himself.

 Be responsible in living life

Notice the Paralytics initial response to…

 ***“Do you want to get well?”***

 One would have expected a clear and definite **“YES”**

However… there is a little Hesitation…

Some resistance, Maybe even avoidance.

He makes a list of excuses for his situation…

* No one to help me to the pool
* Others get there before me

This suggests that it was **THEIR FAULT…**

 Because they had not given him the help he needed

There are some striking parallels between…

 The Paralytic and Ourselves.

Sometimes WE like him…

 Avoid… **CHANGE** that might free us.

 Resist… **CHANGE** that could benefit us

 Are Hesitant… **TO CHANGE** because we…

Do not know how to be free.

 Fear freedom, to be well again

We… Battle to let go of Patterns of destructive behaviour

 Blame others so we do not need to…

Take Responsibility for our mess.

We resist the Challenge of CHANGE.

Today God asks you… ***“Do you want to get well?”***

 How are you going to respond?

 Are you willing to… let go of some destructive behaviour?

 Let go of some character defect?

 Discard your prejudices?

 Stop blaming others for your mess?

In a nutshell…

 Are you willing to confront the Challenge of CHANGE?

HEALING comes when we are willing to CHANGE.

**SECONDLY…**

***To be well…*** Means a **RISK** of Obedience

 Are we prepared to take the Risk?

Let us take another look at the story.

Following the initial dialogue between Jesus and the Paralytic…

 Jesus gives him a direct command…

 ***“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”***

The Paralytic… **Immediately *OBEYS***

This must have taken huge faith and courage.

Can you imagine some of his thoughts…

 What if I fall?

 What if I cant?

 How will I cope not begging?

 Can I trust this man’s word?

 *(if you read later on in verse 13…*

 *the Paralytic did not Know who Jesus was)*

 Will he help me if I walk?

Consider for a moment what would have happened…

 If the Paralytic did not Obey Jesus…

 His life would have ended as a paralytic…

 There next to the Bethesda.

The lesson is clear…

 Miracles happen when we RISK OBEDIENCE.

Remember some of the other miracles in the Gospels…

 Water into Wine *(John 2)*

- Jesus commands… “Fill the jars and take it to the host”

 Man born blind  *(John 9)*

- Jesus commands… “Go and wash your face”

 Lazarus raised to life *(John 11)*

- Jesus commands… “Come out” and “Untie him”

 Man - paralysed hand *(Mark 3)*

- Jesus commands… “Strech out your hand”

 Peter walking on water *(Matthew 14)*

 - Jesus commands… “Come”

If we want healing, we need to…

 Consider what it is God is asking us to do?

**AND…** Like the Paralytic this will take Courage and Faith.

***DO YOU WANT TO GET WELL?***

There are many ways to re-phrase that question…

 Do you want to be free to live and love more freely?

 Do you want to be released from the things that block

 God’s love from flowing through you?

 Do you want to be set free from the bondages of life?

 Do you want to be free to do God’s will?

God wants to free you from ***ALL*** these things…

  **BUT…** you need to be willing to get up and walk!!

**CHANGE** and **OBEDIENCE** will result in…

 ***New Life and Freedom in Christ.***

May we like the little bird…

 Be released from our paralysis, whatever that may be…

AND May we… Sing and Fly again.

**John 5:1-11 The Healing at the Pool**

After this, Jesus went to Jerusalem for a religious festival. Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool with five porches; in Hebrew it is called Bethesda. A large crowd of sick people were lying on the porches—the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed. A man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him lying there, and he knew that the man had been sick for such a long time; so he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

The sick man answered, “Sir, I don't have anyone here to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am trying to get in, somebody else gets there first.”

Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.” Immediately the man got well; he picked up his mat and started walking.

The day this happened was a Sabbath, so the Jewish authorities told the man who had been healed, “This is a Sabbath, and it is against our Law for you to carry your mat.”

He answered, “The man who made me well told me to pick up my mat and walk.”