CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
APRIL17 2021

Scripture Story: John 5.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages,* chapter 21.

do you want to get well?



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"The sick man was lying on his mat, and occasionally lifting his head to gaze at the pool, when a tender, compassionate face bent over him, and the words, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' arrested his attention. Hope came to his heart. . . .

"Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.' But the man's faith takes hold upon that word. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs" (*The Desire of Ages,* pp. 202, 203).

keytext

"When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, 'Do you want to get well?' . . . Then Jesus said to him, 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.' "

(John 5:6-8, NIV)

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what do you think?

List three of the best decisions you have ever made:

1. _____
   _____
   _____
2. _____
   _____
   _____
3. _____
   _____
   _____

did you know?

John 5:1 conveys the reason that Jesus was in Jerusalem was for "a feast of the Jews" (NKJV). There were three feasts that required all Jewish males to come to Jerusalem: (1) the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, (2) the Feast of Weeks (also called Pentecost), and (3) the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus was attending one of these feasts when He came to Jerusalem and healed the lame man by the pool.



INTO THE STORY

"Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, 'Do you want to get well?'

"'Sir,' the invalid replied, 'I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.'

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.' At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

"The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, 'It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.'

"But he replied, 'The man who made me well said to me, "Pick up your mat and walk."'

"So they asked him, 'Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?'

"The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

"Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.' The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

"So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. In his defense Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.' For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

"Jesus gave them this answer: 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'"

(John 5:1-19, NIV)

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OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think Jesus asked this lame man, "Do you want to get well?"

Why did Jesus not assume this man desired healing?

What does this story teach us about the freedom of human beings to choose?

What does this story teach us about the consequences of our choices?

What does this story teach us about Sabbath observance?

What does this story teach us about caring for the needs of others?

punch lines

"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" **(Galatians 5:19-21, NIV).**

"Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent" **(Mark 3:4, NIV).**

"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience" **(Hebrews 4:9-11, NIV).**

"Then he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath'" **(Mark 2:27, 28, NIV).**

further insight

"God has given no commandments which cannot be obeyed by all. His laws sanction no unreasonable or selfish restrictions."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 204.

"God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 207.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read James 1:5.

Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord. . . . Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life" (Fundamental Belief 10, The Experience of Salvation). Holy lives lead us to wise choices. Reflect on the wisest choice you ever made. Why did that choice come to mind as your wisest choice? What were the consequences of that decision? What have you learned about the importance of wise choices?

Where does today's reading say you can get help to make wise decisions.

Sunday

Read John 10:10.

One day Jesus was moving through the streets of Jerusalem when He happened upon a man who had been crippled for 38 years. Stopping beside the man, Jesus asks one of the strangest questions in Scripture: "Do you want to get well?" Here was a man who could never run or jump or dance. He was trapped in limp and lifeless packaging, yet Jesus was asking if he wanted to be healed. Maybe this crippled man had lost hope. Maybe, after 38 years, he was beginning to think that he would never be healed, so what was the use in desiring it? Maybe, in spite of the wretched conditions, he had become comfortable with his infirmity and really didn't want the responsibilities that life after healing would bring.

In today's reading, who is the thief? What has he stolen or destroyed in your life? Read the last part of the verse again. What is Jesus longing to do for you? Tell God right now how much you want that abundant life. If you don't feel the desire to change from some destructive behaviors, tell Him that, too. He will give you His Holy Spirit to help you sense your need.

Monday

Read John 5:6-8.

The *Key Text* tell us that "Jesus saw him lying there . . ." Ellen White fleshes out the scene: "The Savior saw one case of supreme wretchedness. It was that of a man who had been a helpless cripple for thirty-eight years. His disease was in a great degree the result of his own sin, and was looked upon as a judgment from God. Alone and friendless, feeling that he was shut out from God's mercy, the sufferer had passed long years of misery" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 202). Read the key text again in John 5:6-8. Instead of the words "made well" substitute something that you need to do but are struggling with. For example you may have lost your desire to graduate but you know you have to. Your text would read, "Do you want to finish school? Get up and pass that class and get that diploma."

Tuesday

Read Mark 3:4.

What does the response in John 5:10 to the man carrying his bed tell you about those who spoke to him?

Those who spoke to the man were more concerned about the rules that they had imposed on Sabbathkeeping than the well-being of the man. How did Jesus feel about this? Look at His question in Mark 3:4 regarding another Sabbath healing. What can we learn about how to keep the Sabbath from Jesus' example?

Wednesday

Read Luke 4:16-20, 38-39; Mark 6:2.

Jesus provided other examples of how to keep the Sabbath day during His ministry on earth. According today's Bible reading, how did Jesus keep the Sabbath? Make a list of ways that you can keep the Sabbath like Jesus.

Thursday

Read John 14:13.

If Jesus approached you today and asked if you would like to be healed, how would you respond? What would you ask to be healed of?

Claim the promise in today's reading as you ask for healing today.

Friday

Read Ephesians 2:1.

Ellen White offers this insight into the story of the lame man: "Through the same faith we may receive spiritual healing. By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. . . . Christ is able and longs to deliver" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 203).

Questions to consider:

- What is the state of my spiritual health?
- Am I growing stronger or weaker in the Lord?
- What does Christ "long to deliver" me from?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 21.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

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