



Living Lent | March 21

Oblivious to the Obvious?

There was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, “It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.” But he answered them, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’” They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take it up and walk’?” Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.” The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them, “My Father is still working, and I also am working.” For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

John 5: 1-18 (NRSV)

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

Jesus' life was punctuated with personal encounters with ordinary people, each with

a story to tell! These stories are freighted with the truth about Jesus and about us. Jesus invites us to see ourselves through His eyes. When we do, we can see Him as He is, and why He is so much more than we dare ask or think.

In John 5, Jesus approaches one man among countless hurting and hopeless people laying by the pool at Bethesda, not far from the Temple. The man had placed his hope in healing, but by a means he also believed was unattainable. In his mind, he had too little help and too much competition.

The people gathered at the shared pool were broken physically and spiritually, and they fixated on their future hope as a long shot. The man Jesus singled out represents all of them and all of us.

The few words Jesus and this man exchanged spoke volumes, especially the man's response to Jesus' direct question, "Do you want to get well?"

What does the man's reply reveal?

Notice that the man answered a question Jesus did not ask. Even more, the man failed to see that the Questioner who stood before him was the answer.

Jesus heard the man's reply. With compassion, Jesus gave the man what he needed rather than what he believed he needed. "Pick up your bed and walk," He said. The man did, and his body was healed, though at that moment he still did not know his healer. Jesus would later ensure he knew.

Have you ever limited God by seeing your situation too narrowly? We all do it when we live by sight, rather than by faith in the One who can do all things, including giving us eyes to see Him.

Charles Spurgeon noted, "their eyes were fixed on the water...they were so taken up with their own chosen way that the true way was neglected." Can't we all be spiritually blinded and crippled in our limited thinking? At these times, Jesus stands ready to heal and has already given us Hope that transcends the troubles of this life. In all that Jesus did and does, He always has our ultimate healing in mind. As John states at the close of his gospel, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 30:31

How will we answer when Jesus asks, "Do you want to get well?" May we all say, "Yes, Lord!"

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ

Pastor Kenny Grant was born and raised in Brunswick, GA, and is a graduate of Glynn Academy. Joining the Marine Corps at 17, he quickly met a young Navy man who shared the Gospel. During this time, he received Christ and married his high school sweetheart. For anyone that has ever heard Pastor Kenny preach, it will not be a surprise that he was able to discern and sense God's call to teaching and preaching and that he remains passionate about teaching the Word of God and equipping people to apply His word to their lives. Today, Kenny and his wife, Shirley, have shared 43 years of marriage, raised 4 children, and are proud grandparents to 6 grandkids. Kenny reconnected with The Community Church of St. Simons Island as the Teaching Pastor in 2022 and he remains a vital member of that leadership team for the cause of Christ.

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