

Living Lent | Saturday, March 12

Scott Tucker

He is at Work

Today's Reading: John 5:1-18

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" 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 going another step down before me." Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

John 5:6-17 ESV

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

A few summers ago my family made a quick road trip to visit our son in Chicago. He found cheap last-minute tickets for a Cubs baseball game in historic Wrigley Field. We arrived early, watched batting practice, bought some snacks, and then made our way toward our seats. Imagine my

surprise when I saw that my seat was directly behind a massive steel beam, obstructing my view of home plate and the entire infield. I started the night stretching one way or the other, hoping for a better angle. Then I gave up, accepted the obstructed view, ate my peanuts, and hoped for a hit to drive some action into the outfield where I could see it.

It's one thing to have an obstructed view at the ballpark. But it's another thing entirely to face all of life with an obstructed view.

That's how you might describe all these folks who gathered regularly at the Bethesda pool. They had different problems, blind, lame, or paralyzed, but they each had the same obstructed view.

How would you handle such an obstructed view, caused by a disability that limited your everyday activity? Would you grow tired of how other people treated you? Or would the obstructed view signal a gradual loss of hope that anything could ever get better?

For one friend at the Bethesda pool, Jesus showed up, listened to his story, and learned the details of his thirty-eight-year obstructed view. A brief conversation, some very direct words from Jesus, and everything began to change. Not only did Jesus bring the man physical healing: "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." Jesus also opened up a wider view, an unobstructed view of God's character and God's persistent kindness. Jesus said, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." (John 5:17)

God, will you restore in me the gift of hope today? Please remind me you are at work, even if I cannot see it clearly. And keep reminding me you are at work until I can see it clearly again. Amen.

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ:

Scott Tucker is the founding pastor of Good Shepherd Savannah and a presiding elder for the Global Methodist Church in the Savannah/Effingham area.