Series: Hope Again

**When You Feel Like Giving Up**

John 5:1-15 May 14, 2017

1. Jesus seeks people trapped in self-pity. (vv. 1 – 9a)

a. Jesus pursues us when we’re desperate.

* v. 1 *there was a feast of the Jews*
* v. 3 *In these lay a multitude of invalids*
* The upper class and the religious conservatives would avoid a place like this for fear of disease and impurity.
* v. 6 *Jesus saw him lying there and knew*
* Luke 5:31 *And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”*

b. Getting better requires a decision.

* v. 6 *Do you want to be healed?*
* v. 8 *Get up, take up your bed, and walk.*
* G. K. Chesterton: Christianity has not so much been tried and found wanting as it has been found difficult and left untried.

c. What we want isn’t always what we need.

* v. 7 *Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool*
* He wants someone to help him feed his superstition.
* He has become embittered in self-pity and hopelessness.
* Unwilling to say, “Yes,” or “No,” he excuses himself.
  + Jesus heals him anyway.

Q. What does it tell you about Jesus that He would hang out with a crowd of sick people when most people were feasting?

Q. In what sense does ‘getting better’ require a decision? Does just ‘choosing to get better’ take away all of our sicknesses & trials?

Q. When does self-pity get in the way of you getting better?

2. Jesus seeks people trapped in judgmentalism. (vv. 9 – 13)

a. Jesus pursued his critics by deliberately healing on the Sabbath.

* v. 9 *Now that day was the Sabbath.*
* Jesus could have avoided a lot of personal stress by only healing people from Sunday to Friday. But He knew people wouldn’t get better as long as they were trapped in judgmentalism. Jesus loved His critics by confronting them.

b. Critics are too busy finding fault to celebrate God’s mercy.

* v. 10 *It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.*
* Nothing in the Old Testament forbid carrying a bed mat on the Sabbath but later Jewish traditions detailed hundreds of rules about what constituted work.
* Arnold: To forbid this man from carrying his bed was like forbidding a modern man to move a chair or a campstool. Either he must have left his bed at the pool, to be stolen, or he must have stayed there to watch it, or he must have been allowed to take it home with him.
* They’re so consumed with their traditions that they ignore the wonderful miracle of Jesus’ healing.

c. They sought Jesus to reprimand Him not to worship Him.

* v. 12 *They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?”*
* v.13 *the man who had been healed did not know who it was*

Q. When are you most tempted to be critical?

Q. Have you seen examples of a critical spirit getting in the way of more important things (e.g. in your family, church, or work)?

Q. What can help deal with tendencies toward negativity and a critical and judgmental spirit?

3. Jesus seeks people trapped in complacency. (vv. 14 – 15)

a. Jesus pursues a man who didn’t even bother to ask His name.

* v.13 *the man who had been healed did not know who it was*
* v. 14 *Afterward Jesus found him in the temple*
* Jesus goes looking for the man who was healed. It was he who should have been seeking Jesus.

b. Complacency keeps people from seeing their real sickness.

* v. 14 *Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you*
* v. 15 *The man went away and told the Jews*
* Revelation 3:17 *For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*
* Proverbs 1:32 *For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them;*

Q. Why don’t you think the healed man asked Jesus’ name or why didn’t he seek to find Him?

Q. Why did Jesus go out of His way to find the man He had healed?

Q. To a man in old age, what could be worse than 38 years of paralysis?

Q. In what areas of your life are you most tempted towards complacency? What can help shake complacency in a person’s life?

Conclusion: Jesus pursues people who aren’t looking for Him. In compassion, He seeks people who have given up, and others who are judgmental or complacent. By following Jesus in faith and obedience, we can find the wellness that people wrongly seek in superstition, tradition.

Study ahead: next week, we’ll look at John 5:16-29.

**Notes:**