



## **Do You Want To Be Healed?**

Text: John 5:1-9

Bible Teacher Timothy Ateek

1. Read John 5:1-9. Jesus encounters people who are broken and powerless at the pool of Bethesda – in what ways can we agree with Timothy’s question – “What if Faithbridge is a gathering place of broken and powerless people?”
2. According to John 5:5 the man in the story had been an invalid, had something broken in his life, for 38 years! It appears from the passage that he had lost hope of ever being able to be healed.
  - a. Have you ever been tempted to think this way about the brokenness you find in yourself? If you are willing, please share with your group any areas of your life that you are struggling to believe can be healed.
  - b. Have you ever been tempted to think this way about the brokenness you see in those around you?
  - c. What does the Bible say about God’s ability to heal? Do you have a favorite passage about healing, physical, emotional, spiritual, or otherwise? If so, please share that passage with the group and why it is meaningful to you.
  - d. How can we maintain hope when healing does not appear to be coming or is not coming as quickly as we would like? (See Study Deeper)
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.
  - a. Why was this “thorn in the flesh” given to Paul?
  - b. What purpose did God want to achieve through this in Paul’s character?
  - c. What was the life - changing lesson that Paul learned from God when God denied his prayer?
  - d. How can we be glorified in our weakness?
4. Read Romans 8:28 and Genesis 50:20. How can something be both used by God and be caused by Satan’s destructive work?

5. Read James 5:16. God often heals through His people. How have you seen this to be true in your life? Are there areas of your life that you did experience healing because of the Lord working through the body of Christ around you?

**Challenge:** Read John 5:7 – who around you is broken and in need of healing and community? Take the first step this week to invite them into community with you.

**Prayer:** God, You know me so well. You created me. You know the number of hairs on my head, and You even know the thoughts conceived in my heart before I ever vocalize them. You've told us to come to You and ask for every need of life. You are Jehovah-Rapha, the God who heals, and You have the final word on my destiny, the number of years I'll live and serve You on earth.

I'm coming to You today, longing to hear from You and asking for Your divine healing. There's so much I don't understand about life. But I do know that with one touch, one word, You can make me whole. Please forgive me of my sins, cleanse me of my unrighteousness, and begin Your healing from the inside out.

I don't always know what Your will is Lord, especially in times like now, when I desperately seek Your face. I offer You no promises, no bargains, no deals to exchange for my health. I simply bow my heart before You to tell You the desire of my heart: that I want to spend as many years as I can loving You here, loving others, and wanting to become more like You. However you choose to accomplish that is up to You—and okay with me. If You use doctors to provide healing, give them wisdom to know what to do. Regardless of how You accomplish it, the healing You give is always miraculous. And You deserve all the praise.

I absolutely believe You have the power to heal. You demonstrated that on earth, and You still heal in miraculous ways today. Even when my faith is weak, You say it is enough, and my love for You is strong. And I know You already hold my heart and life in Your hands. It's up to You. If I can bring You more glory through healing, then that's what I ask for. That's what I desire.

But if Your answer is no, or not now, I know that Your grace is sufficient for me. Ultimately, I want Your will to be my will. I look forward to spending an eternity with You. But Lord, if You have planned still more for me to do here on this earth, I not only need and want Your physical healing, Lord, but a thorough, deep-down cleansing and strengthening—a whole-hearted renewal of all that I am. Because all that I am is Yours. Use this trial to strengthen me from a "what-if" faith to a "no-matter-what" faith. And no matter what, I choose to honor You and give You glory.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

## STUDY DEEPER

### **A Hope Greater Than Healing**

Lots and lots of people in our churches are in serious, ongoing, life-threatening pain.

I wrote before about how God does not just bring us through suffering, but he also works in our suffering. But, what if the healing comes? Or, what if it never comes in this life? Is our hope in the comfort, the relief, the healing here? No, far more than healing, our hope is in God himself and him alone.

### **The Futility Around Us**

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility. . . For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. (Romans 8:18–22)

This paragraph begins and ends with suffering. We know from the Bible and from experience that there are deeply painful experiences of suffering for us in this life. And we also know that much of the brokenness we experience personally has to do with the broken world we live in, cursed by God because of sin.

The earth we call home has been “subjected to futility.” It is in “bondage to corruption.” It has been “groaning in the pains of childbirth.” There are earthquakes, tsunamis, tornadoes, and hurricanes that wreak havoc in our world. And there are smaller, but awful problems like difficulties with crops, water flooding basements, and trees falling on houses. In your neighborhood, across our nation, and around the globe, the world we live in is broken and futile in all kinds of ways.

### **The Futility Within Us**

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:23)

It’s not only creation that’s groaning in futility, but human beings – us – even Christians. Even those who have escaped condemnation (Romans 8:1–4) and have the Spirit of God living inside of them are groaning in pain and suffering and confusion. Why?

Because even those who have put their faith in Christ still must live in these broken bodies conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5). We’re called to “put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit” (Romans 8:13), which means our bodies will still desire sin, even after we’re in Christ. Paul goes as far as to say that these bodies are dead (Romans 8:10–11). And not only is there still sin in us,

but there is physical suffering of every kind. There is chronic pain, auto-immune diseases, extreme disabilities, cancers, and everything in between. Our bodies are “wasting away” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

The picture we come away with is one in which not only is creation futile and groaning, but so are we – groaning because of sin and because of suffering. A futile place with futile people. Things simply are not as they should be.

“We’re fragile people living in a futile world. Things simply are not as they should be.” Tweet

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Healed Today, Gone Tomorrow

I pray often for members of our church with health issues that they would be healed. Paul asked three times for his thorn in the flesh to be removed (2 Corinthians 12:7–10). In James, the elders are called in to ask for the healing of a person that is sick (James 5:14–15). It’s right to pray and ask for these symptoms of the curse to be taken away. And yet, many times, there is pain that doesn’t leave. And the healing doesn’t happen.

We rejoice when God heals a case of terminal cancer or relieves someone of chronic daily pain, whether it is through a miracle or a doctor or both. The curse has lost another battle and God has shown his goodness in a sweet and meaningful way in the life of one of his children. But, even the most miraculous healing is extremely temporary and fading. Even if someone is healed after years of chronic pain, or even if a terminal cancer patient watches his tumor disappear, or even if someone with severe disabilities experiences unexpected improvement, our hope far outweighs any healing in this life.

Yes, we praise God for any of these good gifts, but we must realize they’re not the ultimate goal or hope. In fact, the person in pain with cancer or with disabilities is still living in a futile home with a futile body, even after his healing. The healthiest person in the world lives in a place where disaster could strike or his body could fail at any moment.

### **The Futility Behind Us**

These realities are why it is utterly important to find our hope in Jesus Christ himself rather than in any healing or circumstances, however good.

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. (Romans 8:23–24)

Adopted into God's family, we were saved in the hope of the redemption of our bodies. It is amazing that we're no longer under condemnation for our sin (Romans 8:1–4). And it is amazing that we've received the righteousness of Christ as our own (2 Corinthians 5:21). Just as amazing is the reality that one day even our bodies will be redeemed. Even our broken, futile bodies will be free from sin and suffering to fully do what we were made to do: worship Jesus Christ.

This is the promise that makes Romans 8:18 possible for those in pain. "The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." This is why our ultimate hope is not in the healing of our bodies now, but in the redemption of our bodies then.

### The Point of Our Pain

If you're suffering, remember that one day every tear will be wiped away and you will be with Jesus forever. God is making all things new so that there is a day coming when we will worship Jesus with redeemed bodies in a redeemed creation – finally free to focus all of our energy on enjoying and praising the glory of our God. Whether you were healthy or not in this life, you will experience – with all of your senses healed and heightened – the fullness of the beauty of the Lamb that was slain for you.

Ultimately, we don't find our joy in pain-free days or a positive diagnosis. In life and in death, we find our hope and joy in knowing that there is a day coming when we will no longer see Jesus dimly, but face to face – no longer in futility, but in freedom and fullness.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-hope-greater-than-healing>