

Giving Hope to Hurting People **John 5:1-17**

Introduction:

1. There are multitudes of hurting people in the world (vs. 1-3). People suffer from:
 - Physical disabilities
 - Guilt
 - Abuse (emotional, verbal, physical)
 - Depression
2. People often carry a heavy load because of their own sinful choices. This is the indication of Scripture concerning the man in our story.
3. But hurting people are looking for hope. God provided hope at the pool of Bethesda. According to verse 4, why did God do this?
 - Jerusalem was where the Messiah would establish His kingdom. When His kingdom would come, there was a promise of complete and total healing to Israel.
 - God probably did this as a constant reminder of His promise, keeping hope before the people of Israel.
4. But the point is this, hurting people are looking for hope.
5. This is why people turn to certain things and make certain decisions. People turn to drugs, false religion, hobbies, gangs, prostitution, alcohol, illicit sexual relationships, money, possessions, etc.
6. Why do people pursue these things? People are looking for hope (some in wrong places). Some are waiting, like in our text (vs. 3). They are waiting for something to change. They may not even know what that something is. They are just waiting and hoping.
7. As believers in Christ, how can we give hope to the hurting and wounded?

First, go where they are. vs. 6

1. Verse 6 really struck me. It says, “*Jesus saw Him lie...*”
2. In this story, Jesus was heading to the temple to observe a Jewish feast (vs. 1). So, He has somewhere to go and something to do. In other words, He was busy.
3. But Jesus did not have tunnel vision. He saw this man, but why would He have seen the man? Obviously, He went to this area where needy people were laying and saw him.
4. God can use us to help hurting people, but we simply have to open our eyes. Jesus said to “*Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields...*” **John 4:35**
5. Isn't this precious? Christ had time for this man. Christ could have gone to the temple and spoke to the masses, but instead, He spent time with one man.
6. Did you notice Jesus? He went where the man was. The man had no strength to come to where Jesus was, therefore, Jesus would have never encountered him had He went straight to the temple. Why was this? This man had no strength to **get** to the temple. How does this apply to your life?

7. We desperately need ministries out and away from the church property. Instead of living in our “Christian cocoons,” we have to go where the people are.
8. We need ministers. What is a minister? Somebody who ministers! In other words, people who care. People who have the heart of Jesus.
9. Jesus reached this man by meeting a core need in his life. It was **after** he met Jesus that he went to the temple (vs. 14). What a lesson for us!
10. We have to go **to** the hurting people; we cannot always expect them to come to us. In their lost condition, they may not have the strength to seek us. We have to seek them. We have to reach out to where they are, and then, they will probably come to church.

Second, care enough to ask questions. vs. 6

1. Jesus asks the man a question, “Will you be made whole?”
2. The first words out of Jesus’ mouth involved a question. Jesus then lets the man talk about his life and condition. What a great lesson for us.
3. Questions are such a great ice breaker when it comes to reaching people and showing people that we care. Jesus asked questions all the time. He asked over 300 questions. He was asked 187, and He only directly answered a few of those. He was the supreme question asker.
4. Try this approach of asking questions.
 - Do you have anything you would like me to pray for?
 - Do you go to church?
 - Do you have any spiritual beliefs?
 - What do you believe about Jesus Christ?
 - Do you believe in heaven or hell?
 - What do you think happens to us when we die?
 - Would you like to know how you can have a right relationship with God?
5. As you ask questions, you begin to learn exactly where people are and how you can guide them to the truth.

Third, take time to listen. vs. 7

1. What did Jesus do after He asked this man a question? Look at verse 7. He just let him talk, and Jesus just listened.
 - This guy did not know Jesus at all and had no clue who he was talking to. That is clear later on in the text. But he just opened up and started talking to Jesus, who was a total stranger to him.
 - A lot of people are lonely and will open right up if someone would show any sign of caring. This guy had nobody. He said, “*I have no man.*” **vs. 7**
2. Sometimes we are so quick to talk, aren’t we? But the Bible teaches that we should be slow to talk and quick to listen. James 1:19
3. Sometimes we simply have to let people talk. You find out how you can really help somebody when you just listen.

4. Many times we are hesitant to share our faith in Christ because we are deathly afraid that they might ask us a question we don't know the answer to. So here's an idea – **you** ask the questions!
5. That way, when you find out where they are at spiritually, you can do your homework and figure out the best way to reach them for Christ.
 - **Example:** They don't believe in heaven or hell. But they do believe Jesus was a good man. Find verses where Jesus talked about heaven and hell and then ask, "If Jesus was a good man, why did He go around lying to people all the time about these things? If He was good, they must be real."

Fourth, share the hope of Jesus. vs. 8

1. What was the answer for this man? What is the first word of verse 8? There was no answer to this man's problem outside of Jesus Christ.
2. A single word from Christ does everything. He said, "*Rise, take up thy bed and walk.*"
 - Strength was imparted.
 - The man gets up and goes away carrying his bed.
3. The impotent man had desire, but no strength. He had tried it on his own, but there was no healing and no peace. He had to get help outside of himself. He would need somebody who cared and had the power to help him.
4. Spiritually speaking, the same is true of every person on this earth. What cripples people today is sin. We are all separated from God by our own wicked thoughts and deeds.
5. Jesus Christ bridged that gap. Jesus Christ made it possible for all of our sin-sick souls to be healed. We cannot bring healing to ourselves, bringing divine forgiveness and reconciliation with God.
 - Just like this man, we are completely crippled by sin. We are incapable of pulling ourselves up by our own boot straps.
6. This is why Jesus came to the earth. He said He came to heal the brokenhearted and set the captives free. Romans 5:6
7. This man had been living under a performance-based system – if you are strong enough, smart enough, fast enough, and better than others, you might be made whole. That left him empty. He could never do enough.
8. In the story, Jesus represents grace. Jesus does it all for the man, and immediately, he is made whole. He takes up his bed and walks; he is a new man.
9. Religion says, "Do, walk, crawl, struggle, and strain, and then maybe you will be made whole."
10. Jesus says, "I will make you whole; **now** go, walk, and do." Ephesians 2:8-10
11. The message we have been given to share is a message of hope, restoration, peace, and grace. It is a glorious message. It is good news!
12. Yes, some people will have questions and doubts. Yes, some people have been completely blinded by Satan's world system. But there are many hurting people that are looking for answers and will gladly embrace the message of Jesus Christ if somebody shares it with them.