

“Do you want to be healed?” After going through Samaria we came into Galilee again. A ruler had come to Jesus begging him to travel 20 miles to Capernaum to heal his sick son. Jesus told him, **“Go home! Your son will live.”** The man trusted and obeyed and headed home. While he was walking back, his servants came to him and said his son was healed. The ruler asked when his son had gotten better and found out it was the very moment he had **“listened”** to and **obeyed** the voice of Jesus.

After a time, another festival came up and we decided to travel again to Jerusalem to celebrate it. As we came into the north end of Jerusalem, we went by the pool of Bethesda. The sick, the blind, and the lame gathered at this pool because there was a belief that when the water of the pool stirred that **healing angels** were present and whoever could get into the pool first would experience **healing**. As we entered the pool area, Jesus began to fixate on one particular man, lying there next to the pool, helpless. Jesus went over to him and said, **“Do you want to be healed?”** It felt like the most ridiculous question we had ever heard. Of course this man wanted to be **“healed,”** that’s why he was sitting next to this pool! The man told Jesus that he did want to be **healed**, but he didn’t have someone who could help him get into the pool before others. Then Jesus said to him, **“Get up, pick up your mat, and walk!”** We all **stared** at each other with wide, surprised eyes. We knew it was the **Sabbath** day. Jesus was telling this man to **break** the Law of Moses and do **“work”** on the Sabbath by carrying his mat. **Why** was Jesus asking him to do this?! And we also wondered, would the man listen to **Jesus** or would he listen to **Moses** and the authorities of Jerusalem?! How far was this man willing to go to be **“healed”**? The man did not hesitate long. Before we could answer inside ourselves what we would do in his situation, the man **stood up**, **picked up** his mat, and began **walking**. It was wild. This man had not walked in **38 years**. And yet here he was, walking. Crowds of people began to gather and soon swallowed the man up in their interest and fascination. And along with Jesus, we headed to the temple.

After a while we saw the man walking around the temple, carrying his mat. This was the first time in 38 years he had been allowed into the temple. Jesus walked over to the healed man and said, **“Look! You have been healed. Stop being selfish so that something worse doesn’t happen to you.”** This man’s flesh and body had been healed, but Jesus was saying there was a deeper healing that needed to take place within him. It was not long after this that the authorities showed up. They surrounded us and they were angry. They had told the man, **“It is the Sabbath! It is not lawful to carry your mat!”** But the healed man did not care, he had been **“healed”**! But the authorities did not care that he was healed, they cared about the Law of Moses above all else. And the Law of Moses said that anyone who did **“work”** on the Sabbath was to be killed by being stoned to death. So the authorities stood around us, demanding that Jesus defend himself. Jesus said, **“My Father is always working and, therefore, so am I.”** They were furious and wanted to kill Jesus even more than before. They could not believe that Jesus would claim to be one with the Creator. But Jesus said, **“Just as the Father raises the dead and makes life, so the Son wants to make life.”** Jesus was telling us that the Creator’s work is to make life out of nothing, even from death. And in order for the cosmos to be sustained and not collapse, the Father must do this **“work”** and **“make life”** even on the Sabbath day. That is why Jesus was healing and working on the Sabbath. Just like his Father, his job was to **“make life”** and he was going to do that regardless of any laws of men.

Then Jesus said, **“Whoever listens to my word, and trusts in my Father, has already crossed over from death into life! The hour is coming and is already here when the dead will listen to the voice of the Creator’s Son and those who listen will live!”** We had witnessed this with our own eyes. Jesus had told the man who had been paralyzed for 38 years, **“Get up and walk!”** The man had **“listened”** to the voice of Jesus and then life and healing exploded within him. The ruler whose son was sick had heard Jesus say, **“Go home! Your son will live.”** The ruler **“listened”** to Jesus’s voice and life had entered his son at that very moment. And there was the Samaritan woman who had **“listened”** to Jesus’s voice at Jacob’s well and her life had been completely transformed. And back in Cana, Jesus had told the servants at the wedding, **“Fill the jars.”** And when the servants had **“listened,”** then the water had turned into wine. And even more personal to us, Jesus had said to each of us when we had first met him, **“Follow me!”** And when we had **“listened”** to Jesus’s voice, we had begun to cross over from death into life. Not in a physical and fleshly way, but in a deeply spiritual way. These physical healings we had seen were merely outward signs pointing to a deep spiritual healing.

Jesus wanted to **“make life”** within all the people, even within these authorities. But the authorities were not willing to **“listen”** to Jesus’s voice. Jesus had asked the paralyzed man, **“Do you want to be healed?”** That man was interested in **“health”** and **“life”** and so he had **“listened”** to Jesus’s voice, even over the voice of Moses, even when it made his nation turn against him. These authorities were not truly interested in being healed. Jesus was frustrated with them and said to them, **“You do not want to come to me and have life.”** These men loved the Scriptures and yet they were refusing to **“listen”** to Jesus, the very one the Scriptures were pointing to. They couldn’t trust in Jesus because they cared more about the opinions and approval of men than they did about the opinion and approval of the Creator. Jesus cared about one thing, saying to us all, **“I do not seek my will, but the will of my Father.”** And if we were being honest, it wasn’t just these authorities who were struggling to **“listen.”** We saw in our own selves a hesitation to be **all in** with Jesus—to truly **“listen”** and obey with all of our minds, hearts, bodies, and souls. Would we be willing to break the laws of men to **obey** Jesus? Would we be willing to become a total outcast in our society for Jesus? Would we be willing to lose everything, including our very lives so we could **“listen”** to Jesus?

“Do you want to be healed?” Jesus asks us this question this morning. **“Do you want to be healed?”** We may think the answer is a quick “yes”—of course we want to be **“healed”**! But in reality, our answer to this question tends to be more complicated. We want to be **“healed”** but we don’t want to do the work of **obedience** that is required, we don’t want to leave everything behind. Wanting **“health”** and **“life”** from Jesus means we have to **“listen”** to his voice and do what he says—in **all** situations and circumstances, no matter the consequences. The authorities would have said they wanted **“health”** and **“life,”** but they did not want it at the **cost** of **“listening”** to Jesus above all other voices. To receive **“health”** and **“life”** from Jesus we must follow no matter what. We must get up and go with him, we must **obey** him and do what he asks. If we want to be **“healed”** then we need to listen to Jesus say to us, **“Get up and walk!”** We often do not want to **“get up,”** we don’t want to **“walk,”** we like being **stuck** in our addictions and bad habits, we like our place in society, we like to stay **paralyzed** in our lives of self-medication and entertainment.

“Do you want to be healed?” Do you really want the **“health”** that Jesus offers you? Are you ready to **“listen”** to Jesus instead of the opinions of the crowd and the opinions of your family? Are you ready to do whatever Jesus asks, even when you don’t want to and even when it will upset those around you? **“Do you want to be healed?”** If you really want true, deep, and eternal **“healing,”** then listen to Jesus. **“Stop being selfish,” “get up and walk,”** and **“follow”** Jesus into a whole new life. It will cost you **everything**, you will have to let go of **all** that you cling to, but in the end you will find **“healing”** and **“life”** through following Jesus’s voice alone. **“Do you want to be healed?”** Then **“get up and walk!”** Amen.