

Well, Do You?

In scripture, the word "dead" is used not only to describe literal physical death, but relational death, spiritual death and death in sin. Death as state of being as opposed to a state of finality. These biblical deaths are never portrayed as hopeless, but as a condition that can be reversed through God's power and our repentance

In John Chapter 5, we read a story about a lame man that Jesus heals. This man has been afflicted with a paralytic condition for 38 years. He told Jesus that he had been waiting by this healing pool known to occasionally be "stirred up" by an angel, and provide healing to the first sick person that makes it in. The man tells Jesus that other people keep beating him into the pool. Instead of just healing this poor man, first Jesus asks the man a question.

"Do you want to get well?"

Seriously Jesus, do you have to ask? Of course this man wants to be healed. He's been afflicted for 38 long, painful years. Jesus does have a point though--how is it after 38 years, this man could never make it down to the pool in time? Why weren't his feet positioned so close to the water that he wouldn't be able to miss the "stir?" Are we sure he really wants it, and if he doesn't, why not? Maybe the man had become comfortable in his poolside prison. Maybe he realized that his healing would mean he would no longer have a literal and figurative "crutch." Was is that he knew after he was healed, he would need to find a skill or trade to support himself? Maybe he was afraid of change. Could it have even been that his identity was so wrapped up in his affliction, that the thought of healing meant losing himself? Scripture doesn't say.

Healing requires something from us. Maybe we expect that once we become Christians, the work is done. The dead in us automatically becomes life. Our "dry bones" begin regenerating. Our afflictions are just magically healed. One of my "afflictions" has been a dysfunctional and abusive family. Through God's provision I came to know Christ as a teenager. That didn't change my family. The abuse and dysfunction continued, and when I was old enough to leave the situation, I carried my own learned dysfunction into every other relationship. Healing would require me to dig up all the pain I had shoved down for years, every unhealthy coping mechanism and vice, and surrender it all to God. It would require me to behave in a way that God was asking me to behave, which was contradictory to my emotions. Healing would require me to forgive people I didn't view as worthy of my forgiveness. Most of all, it would require me to give up my excuses to be angry and bitter, and take ownership of my own sickness. I wouldn't just need to tell God that I wanted to be healed, I'd have to actually allow Him to do something *in* me, and not just *for* me.

It's not until we lay out the welcome mats on the porches of our hearts, and invite Him into every room—no holds barred—that that our lives can be transformed. Jesus wants us to be

continually tapped into His healing power. A power that previous to Jesus' death on the cross, was barred from us in the form of a veil. That long Saturday between Jesus' death and resurrection, was the first full day that the greatness of His healing power became available to us-- not just in heaven, but on earth. He wants our lives to be free of our sicknesses and to dwell in the joy of healthy, obedient living. He doesn't just want to give us the gift of Heaven, but the gift of a good life right now.

Do we want it? Do we want to be healed? Do we want our relationships to be healthy? Do we want to be free of harmful habits? Do we want to be able to let go of the past? Do we want new life in Him to renew us to the very core? Into our very bones?

He is here. He is waiting for us to grab ahold of him, admit that we need His guidance, and walk hand-in-hand with Him through the healing process. In Christ, death has lost its sting. The same power that rose Him from the dead can breathe new life into all of the "death" we possess now. We are a new creation. Isn't it time we lived like it?

Discussion Questions:

- What would it feel like to be healed after 38 years? What are the first three things you'd want to do?
- Read Ephesians 2:1-8
- In this passage, Paul Talks about the idea of being physically alive but spiritually dead. What would you say it looks like to be spiritually dead? Is it always obvious?
- In verse 8 it says "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Do you think this contradicts the narrative that we have some control over our healing? Why or why not?
- If you're comfortable, share a time that something in your life seemed dead, but was "resurrected" by a combination of the power of Christ and obedience to Him.
- What do you think it means for God to have done something for you but not in you?
- Go around the room and take prayer requests. Spend some time praying for one another and thanking God for his ability to heal every part of our lives.