

Introduction

- Notes from the Underground
 - Fyodor Dostoyevsky's work deals with a man who yearns for connection and change but when chances come for him to change, the underground man recoils
 - He's become so comfortable in his life that he can't imagine change even though it's so obvious that's what he yearns for.
 - The Underground Man is a man who has spent years wallowing in his cynicism and self-imposed isolation.
 - Deep inside, he longs for connection and change, yet every time an opportunity for genuine help or transformation presents itself, he recoils.
 - His resistance isn't born solely from stubbornness but from the fear that letting go of his familiar suffering would strip away a core part of his identity.
 - In his eyes, the very act of suffering has become a constant—even if painful—that he understands and controls, making the idea of change all the more terrifying.
 - This narrative resonates powerfully with the sermon theme: many of us, even when we cry out for a better life, cling to our struggles because they are known and somehow safer than the uncertainty of change.
 - The Underground Man's self-sabotage, his deliberate rejection of help, and his internal rationalizations all serve as a mirror to our own tendencies to hold onto what is familiar—even when it harms us.
 - *His story challenges us to consider how our comfort zones, even in pain, can keep us from embracing the possibility of renewal and transformation.*

- *I've often heard it said that we prefer a known Hell to an unknown paradise and we show that truth deeply, everyone of us.*

Introduce Jesus' question in John 5:6:

- Into the midst of our self-imposed suffering comes a question from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!
 - "Do you want to be healed?"
- It seems obvious, yet it reveals something deeper about human nature.
 - Sometimes, we're struggling and we don't have to be.
 - Sometimes, healing is right in front of us and we need merely fall into the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ.

Today, we will walk through three movements in this story, looking at:

1. The Hopeless Situation (Verses 1-7)
 2. The Authoritative Word of Christ (Verses 8-9)
 3. The Call to Transformation (Verses 10-15)
- I. The Hopeless Situation (Verses 1-7)

John 5:2-5 – “Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.”

Tell the Story

- This is the third sign in the Gospel of John
 - Remember the signs are actions and events that somehow directly point to Jesus as God.

- In the Gospel of John, signs are more than miraculous events—they are intentional revelations of Jesus’ divine nature and mission.
 - Each sign is designed to reveal God’s glory and to confirm Jesus as the incarnate Word, urging believers to recognize him as the source of eternal life.
 - For instance, turning water into wine at Cana isn’t just a display of power but a sign pointing to the new joy and abundance offered through Christ.
 - Similarly, raising Lazarus from the dead underscores the promise of resurrection and eternal life.
- Moreover, these signs serve a dual purpose:
 - they validate Jesus’ identity to his contemporaries
 - invite readers into a deeper, faith-based understanding of God’s redemptive work.
 - They bridge the visible and the invisible, challenging observers to move beyond skepticism toward a transformative belief that transcends the physical world.
- Man Trapped in His Condition
 - This man had been paralyzed for 38 years—a lifetime for many in that era.
 - He was in a place of supposed healing, yet he remained unchanged.
 - Can you imagine the daily agony of being that close to what you want but never getting it
 - Maybe it would be like buying a lottery ticket every single day knowing it was a near mathematical impossibility for you to win.
 - The belief was that when the water stirred, the first person in would be healed
 - But this man had no one to help him.
 - He had been waiting on the system, but the system never worked for him.
 - Have you ever trusted a system more than the Lord?
 - I know I have to my own detriment.

Jesus' Question

- Do you want to be healed?
- This seems like an odd question
 - Why ask it?
 - Just like the Underground Man, people get comfortable in their suffering—resigned to their condition.
- Notice – The man doesn't directly say "Yes"—instead, he explains why he can't be healed.
 - He assumes the only way to be healed is by getting into the water.
 - This is so typical a response from someone who is stuck
 - Instead of a yes or no answer, they begin to tell you the story of WHY things can't or won't change as opposed to embracing the change itself.

Application: Where Are We Waiting for the Wrong Solution?

- Many people put their hope in the wrong things—relationships, self-help, money, or religious rituals.
 - I met a young man doing Kairos that put his faith in his gang.
 - He was heartbroken with that faithfulness led him to jail
 - You could tell he felt trapped but could see no way out.
- Some people are so used to brokenness that they don't actually want change—they just want sympathy, not transformation.
 - We see a lot of this at the church. Just about every other week, some poor soul stumbles on the church, looking for a handout.
 - And we meet their needs, as best we're able but more often than not, we see our money go to booze and drugs and other things that aren't quite good for us.
 - But we, ourselves, can get like this in other ways in our own lives
 - We can become resistant to the very changes we know God would have us make.

- So I guess the question is – What are you waiting on to change your life?

II. The Authoritative Word of Christ (Verses 8-9)

- “Jesus said to him, ‘Get up, take up your bed, and walk.’ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.”

Jesus’ Command is Immediate and Powerful

- Notice what Jesus doesn’t do
 - He doesn’t help him into the water.
 - He doesn’t wait for the pool to stir.
 - He doesn’t make him earn it.
- Jesus speaks, and it happens.
 - Heitlewort and Theitlewort by Martin Luther
 - When God speaks, something happens.
 - I now pronounce you man and wife
 - Those are powerful words.
 - By God’s command, two individuals are joined into a holy matrimony.
 - It’s different than our words
- And NOTICE!
 - The healing is instant—no therapy, no gradual recovery, no process.

Jesus’ Authority Over Human Systems

- The pool represented an old way of thinking—that healing was dependent on effort or chance.

- Jesus, in his Divinity, bypasses the system completely.
- This is a picture of grace—God does for us that we cannot do for ourselves.
 - This is the most important part of what Jesus did
 - We are sinful, needing redemption
 - Jesus Christ, sinless, no need for redemption yet he lays down his life for us, so that we can once again come into full Communion with the Father.

Application: Where Do We Need to Listen to Jesus' Word?

- The Word of Christ brings immediate change when we respond in faith.
- Are you listening for His voice, or are you still waiting on something else?
 - Obedience follows healing—the man gets up and walks.
 - When we are healed, we obey Jesus

III. The Call to Transformation (Verses 10-15)

“Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, ‘It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.’”

The Religious Leaders Miss the Miracle

- Instead of rejoicing, they complain about the rules.
- They care more about legalism than a changed life.
- This man had never walked in nearly 40 years, and all they see is that he broke a Sabbath rule.
- Sometimes, religious leaders get it wrong.
 - Last year I preached a sermon series called, DO OVER in which I looked at myriad times when the church got it wrong.

- That's why we don't have Popes and bishops
 - We believe everyone is flawed by sin.
 - We trust the Holy Spirit speaking in community to determine the will of God for us.

Jesus Finds Him Again—A Warning

“Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, ‘See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.’” (v. 14)

- Notice this - Jesus isn't just concerned with physical healing—He cares about the soul.
- The worst thing that could happen isn't paralysis—it's being lost in sin.
- Healing should lead to transformation.

The Man's Response—Did He Truly Change?

- He goes back and reports Jesus to the authorities.
- Was he grateful, or was he indifferent?
- Unlike other healed people in the Gospels, there's no evidence of faith or worship.
 - We get a story from the Gospel of Luke, about ten lepers healed by Jesus
 - In that story, nine just return to their lives, healed but unappreciative, I guess would be the word we'd use.
 - This isn't like that, I don't think.
 - I guess I have an optimistic take on this fellow, that he does get it right in the end.

Application: Healing Requires a Changed Life

- Jesus saves us not just to rescue us, but to transform us.
 - That means that the Christian life is dynamic
 - We're supposed to grow and change and better exemplify Jesus on a daily basis.
- Some people want relief from suffering but don't want to follow Jesus.
 - But this doesn't quite work.
- Has Jesus changed you—or have you just benefited from His blessings?

Conclusion: What will you do with Jesus' Question?

1. Are you stuck in a hopeless situation?

- Have you been waiting on something that doesn't work?
- Jesus is asking: "Do you want to be healed?"

2. Are you listening to the authoritative Word of Christ?

- Jesus speaks life—are you responding?

3. Has your healing led to transformation?

- Jesus calls us to live differently after receiving His grace.
- What will your response be?

Closing Illustration

Dave Mustaine

- Dave Mustaine, best known as the former frontman of the renowned heavy metal band Megadeth, experienced a profound personal

transformation that went well beyond overcoming substance abuse and lifestyle excesses.

- In the midst of a tumultuous career marked by destructive behaviors and a world steeped in rebellion, Mustaine reached a critical turning point when he found himself at rock bottom.
- It was during this period of deep personal crisis that he embraced the Christian faith—a decision that reshaped every aspect of his life.
 - His conversion to Christ wasn't merely a rejection of his former ways; it was an invitation to a complete renewal of mind, body, and spirit.
 - Mustaine began to openly share his journey, speaking candidly about the struggles that led him to this path and the healing he found in his faith.
 - His testimony resonates with many, serving as a powerful reminder that even those who seem firmly entrenched in a life of excess can experience a radical transformation through Christ.
- The greatest miracle is not just healing—it's a changed heart.

Final Call to Response

- End with an invitation to trust Jesus, whether for the first time or in a deeper way.
- Jesus' question is still relevant today: "Do you want to be healed?"
- What will your answer be?