

# **Sermon: Do You Want to Be Made Whole?**

**Scripture: John 5:1-9**

How many of you like to watch movies?

I just want to start off by saying, “I love movies.” You can get a lot from movies. I just wanted to get that off my chest before I started teaching. I love movies. “Don’t judge me.”

Some of you may or may not agree with me but **one** of the best movies that I have ever seen was the “Black Panther.” I love that movie.

It is amazing how God would use a make-believe Marvel movie to remind and stir up such pride in a people who must have forgotten who they are. This movie depicts Black folks or African Americans whichever

you like to be called in a positive light giving young people hope. Vision of who they are or could become. This movie showed that we do not have to live up to the negative stigma that has been attached to being Black. We are ingenuitive and beautiful people.

Do you Remember! There were grown folks hollering Wakanda forever.

Look at your neighbor and ask “was it you?”  
Um uh, I see you.

Real quick, I am going to summarize the movie for you. The movie is about African tribes that came across a rare substance called vibranium. The warrior would ingest a "heart-shaped herb" containing metals that gives him superhuman abilities and he would become the "Black Panther".

In the movie, he unites all the tribes but one to form the kingdom of Wakanda. When the movie began the king has just died and the people assumed that his son would be next to take the throne. However, he couldn't just take the throne, he had to go through the ritual and the possibility of combat before he could be crowned king because there were customs, rituals, legal parameters, laws, rules that govern everything in the kingdom of Wakanda.

When a powerful enemy suddenly reappears, T'Challa's mantle as king -- and as the Black Panther -- gets tested. He is drawn into a conflict that puts the fate of Wakanda and the entire world at risk. Faced with treachery and danger, the young king must rally his allies and release the full

power of Black Panther to defeat his foes and secure the safety of his people.

The Marvel movie Black Panther is make believe but the Kingdom of God is not.

Jesus our king has released His full power to defeat the enemy and secure the safety of His People!

That was good right there. That was enough to shout and give God praise.

There is nothing that our God can't fix.

There is nothing our God can't handle.

The KINGDOM belongs to God.

For He is the ALPHA and the OMEGA

The beginning and the end. The creator of the Universe.

Abba, Father! El Elyon, God most High!

El, Roi, the God who sees us!

He is El Shaddai, God Almighty.

Jehovah Jireh, the Lord our Provider.

He is the Redeemer.

The mighty Healer.

He is God

And all power is in His hands.

Somebody ought to give God praise!!!!

**He is the one who can put our enemy in check!**

**Turn with me to John 5:1-9**

As you are finding the scripture, I thought about this:

When one is broken, it's hard to imagine being whole or complete.

So, the title of this sermon is: **“Do you want to be made whole?”**

**I want to read this passage of scripture into your hearing from the NKJV**

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep *Gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew, <sup>[a]</sup>Bethesda, having five porches. <sup>3</sup> In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, <sup>[b]</sup>paralyzed, <sup>[c]</sup>waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>4</sup> For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. <sup>5</sup> Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to

him, “Do you want to be made whole?”  
Some translations use the word “well.”

<sup>7</sup> The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” <sup>9</sup> And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

And that day was the Sabbath. (*the word of God for the people of God*)

Do you know of somebody or have you ever had a loved one trapped in an addiction? Then you know that unless there is a desire to be released from that vise that is squeezing life out of them, little will change.

I know people as I am sure many of you know someone whose history includes long

series of bad choices, from poor nutrition, to extreme partying to continuous engagement in unproductive and destructive behavior. All of this causes deterioration to the body and soul.

I can imagine that some may have even encountered health scares and has received strong words from their doctor.

I know of a young man that had received a strong warning to change. He made promises to change, even started going to church, all to return to his usual ways of unhealthy habits. The fact is, he did not genuinely want anything different. It appears as if, he wanted his unhealthy lifestyle more than he wanted to be made whole.

But, I cannot cast stones because although I don't engage in the activities that he does, at

times I see this unproductive pattern in my own story.

Truth is that if we are to be whole (whether health for our body or restoration in our family or renewed passion in our life with God), then we must want to be whole. We must want it, hunger for it, desire it. We must desire to be made whole!

Somebody shout I want it!!

In our passage, sometime after His stay in Galilee, Jesus travels back to the city of Jerusalem. The author John sets the scene very carefully for us, “After these things, there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.”

During this time, the Jewish calendar contained three high holy days – Passover, Feast of Weeks (better known as Pentecost)

and Feast of Tabernacles. It was common or expected for the devout Jews living in or around the area of Jerusalem to attend all of these “Special days.” But those who lived further than sixteen miles away from Jerusalem, they were only expected to attend at least one of the “Feast” every year. Some theologians believe that since Jesus was a devout Jew, and, like other devout Jews, he made the pilgrimage to the holy city as often as possible to observe the holy feast days.

Now, when Jesus got to Jerusalem he entered the city by the Sheep Gate and went to the pool of Bethesda nearby.

The Sheep Gate-“Bethesda” in Greek means “House of Mercy.”

Somebody shout: “House of Mercy.”

This signifies of what was about to take place, because whenever Jesus, “the King”

shows up to a place truly Grace and Mercy would follow.

It is known that the shepherds would drive their sheep into Jerusalem through the Sheep Gate and on over to the Pool of Bethesda to the right, where they would be washed before taking to the temple to be sacrificed.

The pool of Bethesda was separated by a wall in the middle, creating two bodies of water. The sheep were washed at one end of the pool, and people bathed at the other end of the pool.

Around the sides of the pool where the people bathed, there were five porches or porticos. These “Porticos” were covered walkways, with the roof being supported by columns. It was there under these porticos or what we call porches, where the sick people gathered in hopes of being healed.

Scripture says that “In these lay a great multitude of those with infirmities; sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed waiting”, waiting, waiting for something to happen that would change their situation.

Can you imagine, the agony of waiting, seeing what you want but it’s just out of reach. Seeing the solution to your problem but just not able to reach it. Struggling to reach that thing that would make a difference. But it’s out of your reach. Struggling to make a change in life but not quite being able to get there. People struggling.

I’m not going down that path anymore.

I’m not going to do that anymore.

I’m not going to say that anymore.

I’m not going there anymore.

Struggling to change but things are remaining the same. Nurturing the sickness and losing focus of the one who heals. Concentrating on the problem instead of focusing on the solution. \*\*\*\*

This man was sick for a long time and instead of surrounding himself with people who could help, he surrounded himself with people who were just like him. Sick people comforting other sick people. \*\*\*\*

Misery loves company.

This sick man surrounded himself with people who were just as sick as he was. This is the development of dysfunction. This man gravitated to those who were sick like him and they created a culture. A community of sick folk. This sick man reflected the company he was keeping. He gravitated to a place where he felt accepted.

He was sick so, he surrounded himself with other people who were sick.

You've heard that saying birds of a feather flock together.

You know what I'm talking about

People who gossip hang out with other folks who gossip.

People who don't want nothing out of life hang out with other folks who don't want nothing out of life.

People who get high hang out with other folks who get high.

This man who was sick was hanging out with other folks who were sick.

Jesus asked him a question, "Do you want to be made whole?"

What shocked me was the man's response.

“Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

Is it true that some sick people actually prefer their present condition as oppose to being made whole. Being whole is connected to responsibilities and who want responsibilities.

One can't become changed in an area that they have become comfortable with. This man was doing the same thing every day going to the pool expecting a different result. This sick man was doing the same thing day after day (laying at the pool waiting for the stirring of the water, yet he said he didn't have anyone to help him get in. So, if the water was stirred what was he going to do? If he didn't have anyone to help him get in the water, and he could not get himself in the water, why was he going

hoping to be healed.) Doing the same thing expecting a different result.

He could not become changed in an area that he had become comfortable with.

There is little to no hope in the man's sad reply. He has lost any anticipation. He has lost hope that anything would change. He has lost hope that anyone would help him. Decades of pain, dashed with a displacement of possibilities brought him to the place where all he could do was see a hopeless fate, a bleak future.

There are many reasons why we find it difficult, in our broken places, to stay connected with our desire for change. Our desire for something more. To hope for (to live with the deep desire for) healing can itself be an excruciating act. It is painful to hold to our desire for friendship when the

lack of it only accentuates our aching loneliness. It is painful to stay attuned to our hope to be free of anger or fear or self-righteousness when it means we must dismantle our sinful behaviors or reckon with the lies we've employed to manage our life.

We often abandon our desire for wholeness because we are deeply afraid. While the reality of our life may be far less than what we had expected, over time we make a certain kind of compromise with our brokenness. It becomes what we know. It's a fearful thing to surrender the security of the present (no matter how disappointing or painful it may be) for the uncertainty of the future.

We hold on to the familiar.

When it comes to being made whole, physically or otherwise, the familiar is not the answer.

When it comes to being made whole, the familiar is not necessarily a virtue. Too often we simply repeat misinformation, rehearse old prejudices, practice- tired patterns of behavior and replay thoughts and opinions formed years ago without first checking to see if they're still valid and, more importantly, if they serve the cause of making us healthy or whole.

Just like Jesus asked the man in our scripture “Do you want to be made whole?” Jesus is asking us today, “Do you want to be made whole?” Do you want to experience life in all its abundance? Then, maybe we must try a new approach. Dare to alter our routine. Change our diet. Cultivate new friendships. Break old habits. Learn new techniques for

relating to others more effectively. Get out of our comfort zones.

“Do you want to be made whole?” Because if we do, we might have to step out of our comfort zones and take a leap of faith and venture out into the unknown.

What’s standing in your way? What sort of things do you need to change about your life in order to be whole? Are there things you need to let go of? For example, are you holding on to anger, nursing some injustice or hurt from years back? Are you holding on to grief, looking back to something or someone you once held dear? Perhaps you’re holding on to a destructive habit, wanting to be healthy and whole, but not willing to stop smoking or drinking or eating your troubles away.

Jesus tells the man, “Arise, take up your mat, and walk.” Immediately, (somebody

shout Immediately) the man was made well and took up his mat and walked. (6-9)

The Good News is: Jesus came into the world that we may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10) There is a hymn that says, “There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole; there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.” And I’m not talking about that video that some of y’all been watching on Facebook either.

So then, the question becomes, do you want to be made whole?

Some of us may fear what we do not understand or may have reason to not believe the promises. Many of us simply fear losing control. To come to Jesus for healing, we must relinquish the idea that our life is in our hands. We must admit that we need to be healed and that our own efforts have made a mess of things. To allow

ourselves to be embraced by God's love, we must face the truth of how desperately we long for it. To be made whole, we must grow discontent with our misery and want something more from the Lord. Pick up your mat!

To step into the fullness God intends, we must be awake to Him as well as to our pain and everything in us (and our world) that is not well. We must allow the tears and the joy and the promises of God to resurrect the places in our hearts that have grown cold.

When Jesus speaks, hope is always kindled. The heart is stirred.

After the sick man's disheartening reply, Jesus looked him in the eyes, pushing aside his gloom and spoke to the depths of his soul with authority: "Get up, pick up your mat and walk" (v. 8). The man had a choice.

To be well required obedience and willingness to embrace the joy and healing Jesus offered. The man had to move and take a risk.

And he did. This man who had not stood on his own legs for thirty- eight long years hopped up from the ground, grabbed his mat (I can imagine him walking with a little jig in his step) and walked.

He walked out of his old condition into the new.

New Life!

New way of talking!

New way of walking!

New way of interacting with others!

New way of seeing his surrounds!

New people to hang out with!

New way of loving!

New way of looking!

New view of the future!

New way of facing his challenges!

It's something about when you have a  
encounter with Jesus all things become  
**NEW!**

Just like Jesus spoke to the man with  
authority I speak to you in His authority and  
I say Washington Heights Rise! Take up  
your mat and walk!

When God offers us life, all we have to do is  
stand up. All we have to do is say yes. All  
we have to do is decide we want it and take  
up our mats and walk in it.