

Week of April 15-21

DO YOU?

Scripture Reading: Read John chapter 5

In Proverbs 20:5, King Solomon declares, “*The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.*” One of the ways a man or woman of understanding can draw out these purposes is through the use of questions. Interestingly enough, modern brain research confirms the validity of this approach. When a person is asked open-ended questions, it lights up the creative part of the brain in a way that telling someone by way of lecture does not. As a result, the person asked the questions becomes much more emotionally engaged in the process. I have found this approach to be particularly helping when counseling individuals. Rather than telling, we ask.

Jesus regularly used this approach in teaching and ministry. John's gospel alone features 53 questions Jesus asked. When you add in the other gospels, the number jumps into the hundreds. The questions were intended to stimulate thought and action on the part of his listeners. One such question appears in the opening verses of today's chapter reading: Do you want to get well?

At first glance, we might question the appropriateness of the question. Of course the lame man wanted to get well. Why else would he have been at the Pool of Bethesda? But, since we know that Jesus was led by the Father, the question must have been necessary or he wouldn't have asked it. As we carefully read through the account, we begin to get a clearer picture of why Jesus asked the question.

When asked, “Do you want to get well?” the lame man failed to answer “yes” but simply responded like a victim in verse 7. It seems as if 38 years of waiting shriveled up the man's soul. After Jesus healed the man, he warned him to stop sinning lest something worse happen to him. It appears that the man's condition was caused by his sin in the first place. It looks like Jesus' question was an appropriate one after all. It was a challenge to the lame man to both see and do life differently.

The question continues to be asked by the Lord today. Do you want to get well? Sadly, it has been my experience that not everyone does. Some folks have learned to use their illness to manipulate and control others. To get well means they will have to give up their self-centeredness. Others refuse to acknowledge they are even ill in the first place. To answer the question assumes the condition of brokenness and, for these, people, that is too painful or too frightening of a proposition. Sadly, these folks linger as invalids far longer than the Lord intended, for “Do you want to get well?” is both a question and an invitation to hope, healing and wholeness for those who answer, “YES!”

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Spend some time reflecting on whether you truly want to be well: spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically and relationally. What would wellness look like in your life? Ask the Lord to produce his wholeness in you and submit by faith to his recovery process in your life.

Take-away: *When Jesus asks if you want to get well, simply say YES!*