THE GENIUS OF JESUS
WEEK THREE: “PUT IT TO WORK”
Pastor Steven preached week three of The Genius of Jesus from John 5, using the healing of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda to show us how Jesus works in us so we can allow His grace to work through us.


DIRTY JOBS
- John 5:1-9 tells an account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man by the pool of Bethesda. The story takes place at a pool near a sheep gate, implying that the water was less than pristine. A group of blind, lame, and paralyzed people regularly gathered around the pool, as it was believed that when the water began to stir, the first person to make it into the water would be healed.
- Jesus sought out one man at the pool who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years. Pastor Steven suggested that Jesus didn’t just seek out any person to heal, but He sought out this man to show us that He is not afraid of doing the dirty work. That dirty work is us—Jesus is not afraid to roll up His sleeves and work on our hearts.
- Throughout His life, Jesus worked with purpose (John 6:27), priority (John 9:4), and perseverance (John 17:4).

WHEN IT’S NOT WORKING
- One of the ways we know the genius of Jesus is that He not only knows how the world works, but He knows how to identify the things that aren’t working and take the action necessary to make it work again.
- Jesus often goes to where it is not working. Jesus says: Put me to work today and “I do not want to you to be spiritually unemployed.
- God prefers to do the heavy lifting and execute the difficult tasks – so there is no doubt as to who gets the credit.
- To be human is to have a situation that is difficult and hard to manage. However, God can’t heal what you tend to hide. In the case of the man with the matt, his affliction was easy to see.
- Clearly, something was not working for the paralyzed man in John 5. Jesus asked the man in verse 6, “Do you want to get well?” The man replied in verse 7, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”
- Pastor Steven admitted that by the way he once thought this man was subject to his own mistakes, namely: He had the wrong squad. He was surrounded by people with ailments similar to his. We hinder ourselves and limit our perspectives by only identifying and associating with people stuck in struggles like ours.
- He trusted the wrong system. The only way for the man to be healed was to beat everyone else to the pool as it started to stir. Religion has a way of doing the same thing—the first one in wins. This is the basic rule of secular society as well – the first one in – wins. The most righteous becomes the most loved. However, Jesus came to flip that entire system upside down.
- This is what we understand to be the true nature of mercy.
- His struggles became his securities. It’s possible that he was so used to his paralysis that he was comfortable with it. Likewise, we can accept our struggles and make it difficult to embrace the change we need. Stated another way: If we hang around others that have the same affliction, you probably will have the strength to confront the main problem. We need a different perspective.
- While the cry for help in verse 7 seemed to be the wrong answer, validating all the problems in this man’s life, it was actually those words that invited the healing he desperately needed.
Pastor Steven preached, “It’s possible for us to have the wrong answers and still receive the right results.”

Jesus gives the man a compassionate command. Jesus says, think beyond merely principles. The man got up because he was healed. Not because he was effective. Grace can help you get up. By grace we are given the strength to get up.

That’s part of the genius of Jesus.

WHEN JESUS CONFRONTS THE SYSTEM

Jesus came not only to heal this man’s circumstances, but to confront the world’s broken system.

After being healed, the religious leaders confronted the once-paralyzed man in verse 10, saying, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

The Law laid out in the Old Testament set specific rules for what not to do on the Sabbath day. When Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath, he asked him to pick up his mat, which was a violation of the Sabbath laws. When confronted about it, the man said, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

However, it wasn’t until Jesus later saw him at the temple that man knew it was Jesus who healed him. Once he told the religious leaders that it was Jesus who did this, verse 16 says that they began to persecute Jesus.

Though this may seem like Jesus’ plan backfired, it was this moment that set into motion the very purpose for which Jesus came to earth. By confronting the system, Jesus began to work the system to achieve His purpose.

PUT IT TO WORK

When Jesus healed the paralyzed man in John 5, His command was, “Pick up your mat and walk.”

Pastor Steven pointed out that this man only needed the mat to lie on because he was paralyzed. Once he was healed, he should have had no need for the mat. So why was Jesus so concerned with him picking up the mat?

Pastor Steven suggested that perhaps Jesus wanted the man to carry the mat as a reminder of the way Jesus healed him. For the rest of his life, he’d be able to remember God’s faithfulness. He could also carry the mat as a symbol of hope for other people lying paralyzed on their mats.

But what if Jesus asked him to pick up his mat so he could put it to work?

Ephesians 2:8-10 reads, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

We all have our “mats.” We all have reasons to cry out to God and ask for His grace. But when God gives us His grace, it’s not just for us to hold onto. God gives us grace so we can put it to work in the world around us.