

LIFE LESSONS – Making it Live

David Welsh | “The Odd Question” | John 5:1-9 | November 12 . 13

Superstition and Desperation

What would you be willing to do to be rid of all of your weaknesses and failures? **Discuss:** If someone told you to do something that seemed impossible so that you could be completely whole again, what would your reaction be? The invalid at the Pool of Bethesda was willing to come to that pool every day – even though it was virtually impossible for him to get into that pool at the right time. Probably, after 38 years, he was desperate or perhaps he had given up. Share if you have ever become superstitious or desperate? Did it paralyze you with doubt and fear? Share how you handled it.

Perfection

If God requires perfection, how can any of us get into heaven? In a sense we can all see ourselves as helpless, weak and paralyzed, unable to do the thing we want or ought to do. We find we are crippled; we do not walk very well spiritually. Jesus said, “You must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). **Discuss** how we try to get around that by comparing ourselves with others. How is our comparison not with other people; it has to be with Christ? Read Col. 2:13-15 and discuss how that is possible. When you stand before the judgment seat of God, He sees holiness and perfection. Not yours but Christ’s.

The Odd Question

“Do you want to be well?” Did that strike you as an odd question to a man who had been an invalid for 38 years? **Discuss** how obviously it was important for that man to answer for himself. What about you? Do you want to be well? I think we all know people who do not want to be healed – who do not want to be helped out of their weaknesses. **Discuss:** Sometimes that weakness brings attention or helps escape responsibilities. I’m sure that if this man answered in this way, Jesus would have moved on. You cannot help people who do not want to be helped. They are not helpless enough yet. They are not willing to give up on human effort. Jesus can do nothing for them. What about you? Share how you might be helpless enough yet? Do you want to be well?

Blaming Others

Who are you blaming for your condition? Are you the way you are because that’s how your parents were? Are you this way because of the bad conditions you live in or near? **Discuss:** In a sense, the invalid at the pool blamed others who did not help him get into the pool. But in another sense, he confessed that he was at the end of himself. There was nothing he could do to help himself. That’s where we have to be before Jesus can help us. God just wants us to say, “Forgive me and make me whole again.” Before we can answer Jesus’ question, we must first admit our guilt and our sins.

Transforming Your Life

What do you say to a person who has lost all hope? Do you say, “Oh, come on, I’ll help you get to the pool? Do you say, “Hang on. Keep on coming here. It’ll happen some day?” Do you try to make them comfortable with material things – a new mattress, food brought in each day? That what we say to people, isn’t it. But Jesus didn’t. **Discuss:** First, He asks the impossible; secondly He removes all possibility of a relapse and thirdly, He expects continued success. This man had to believe that Jesus could make it possible. He would have to decide that if Jesus were going to help him, he would have to do what He told him to do. There is always something that God tells us to believe, and do and act on. But the best news is that if Jesus has commanded you to do it, He is the one who gives you the ability to do it. Share how if we obey – it will transform our lives.

Written by Sandy Hooper