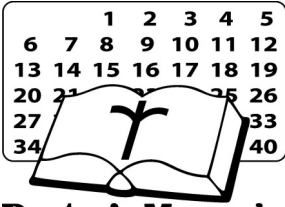


The Sentinel-March 2018



Pastor's Message for Lent

Reflect, Repentance and Renewal

"One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, He said to him, 'Do you want to be healed?'" John 5:5-6

Jesus came to the pool of Bethesda, where there were crowds of sick people lying by the pool. Legend said an angel came down and stirred the pool's water once in a while. The people believed that the first person to get to the pool after that would be healed. And so everyone lay there, day after day, watching the water to see if it would move. One man had been there 38 years!

Jesus spoke to him: "Do you want to be healed?" On the surface, this sounds like a foolish question. Of course the man wanted to be healed! Why else would he come to Bethesda? And yet, maybe not. People can get comfortable in their misfortune. Health is a mixed blessing to someone who only knows how to be ill.

Perhaps the man thought it was a foolish question, too. Who knows? At any rate, the man didn't answer Jesus. Instead, he complained. He couldn't get into the pool fast enough--someone else always got there first. That's why he could never get well, or so he thought.

Jesus cut through all that nonsense. "Get up," He said. "Take up your bed, and walk." Much to his surprise, the man did! He got up and found himself completely healed. The pool was unnecessary. The Son of God, Jesus, had made him well.

Well, family, let's reflect, because we are like that man, too, aren't we? When we fall into sickness or trouble, we seek the best help we can find. We turn to doctors or lawyers or social workers or experts--anyone who can offer us a gleam of hope in our trouble. And we are right to do it. God has given us these good gifts for our protection and help. However, please notice and reread, if you have to, that second sentence within this paragraph. We seek! We don't complain that the doctor didn't call or visit our households when we are sick. We don't make excuses for not going to those experts when trouble occurs. So, why do Christians, including our family members at times, complain about the church, its pastors, staff, and the like for not attending? Basically, it's one excuse after another for not going to His House, His Word or even His Table. In fact, it's like waiting by the pool, waiting to be healed, which will never happen.

Instead, we need to repent. We need to always fix our eyes and hearts on Jesus--for we have been given great wisdom, a God-given knowledge, to turn to Jesus, our Savior, and ask Him to help us. He is the GIVER of all good things; He is our Creator and our Redeemer--as He willingly chose to suffer and die for you on that cursed tree (remembering my sermon on trials and temptations, 1st Sunday in Lent). And yet, family, we are also enabled to have great renewal in our Lent journey, because we have a risen Lord, who absolutely cares for you at all times and in every need.

Therefore, let's respond to His grace, mercy and love! In fact, thanks be to God that He didn't let us wait by the pool, if you will, waiting and wondering about eternal life. Instead, He came to us, to you, by way of His cross and empty tomb with an eternal healing. Again, thanks be to God!

Continued blessings on your Lenten journey,

Pastor Seehafer