

Don't Be Content

9-04-16

John 5:1-9

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. 3 In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. 5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 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?" 7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." 9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Anyone in that situation would want to be healed, wouldn't they?

- There are numerous reasons we wallow/linger in the "not OK" situations.
 - Perhaps believing that ANY attention better than none, or we use it to excuse sin, or see it as a "badge of honor" to "authentically" relate to others. Mattson quote:
- *"While we think self-deprecation causes us to be more relatable and empathetic to non-Christians, it's ultimately communicating a sense of disappointment, disillusionment, and discontentment. It thrives on negativity and kills our sense of hope. The reality is that there are many things wrong with Christianity, but instead of focusing on the bad, let's attempt to reclaim the hope that Jesus represents—redeeming our world by personifying the sacrifice, service, grace, hope, joy, and love of Christ. In Christ, we can be more than scum. That's a message the world sorely needs." Stephen Mattson from Has 'Authenticity' Trumped Holiness? January 26, 2014*

- Being hopeless, helpless, & in need is no virtue.

- Be careful not to become "content" with not being OK.

Scripture teaches us to be content with every gift from sovereign God.

- Possessions, unchangeable physical ailments, marital status, etc.

There is a healthy discontent: like wanting more of a depth/quality of marriage/family/relationships & current state of walk with God. 2 Pet 1:5-8, Phil 3:12-15, 1 Cor 9:25-27

- To mature/grow in faith & holiness we must be like the disciplined, self-denying, and focused athlete.
 - We must accurately know the present state & not be content with that place.
 - Identify the goal & plan accordingly the do's & don'ts!

Our goal is Christlikeness (holiness) & is attained by grace through separation from evil & dedication/commitment to life of righteousness

- Avoid sin in thought/word/deeds & bear fruit of Holy Spirit.

But at foundational level, it's hungering to be like Jesus. Mt 5:6, 1 Jn 2:6, 1 Pet 1:15, 1 Cor 11:1 Spurgeon quote

- Christ uses the strongest impulses in the natural realm to represent the depth of desire Christians should have for holiness/righteousness.
- We need to focus not on actions of satisfying the hungering/thirsting, but rather on the craving.
 - The true believer has a strong desire to obey God (holiness), even though he struggles with his unredeemed flesh. Rom 8:23
 - The cross bought freedom from sin's penalty & release from sin's power/control.

Ultimately only God makes us like Christ but holiness is a collaborative effort between you and the Holy Spirit. It's grace with blisters. Phil 2:12-13 & 1:5-6, 2 Cor 3:18

- God supplies the means to accomplish sanctification, but we must participate it daily by obeying and loving Him.
 - Sanctification is not a big one time event, but gradual progress from where we are at to where we ought to be. Kevin DeYoung quote: *The youthful artist as he grasps his newly sharpened pencil can hardly hope to equal Raphael or Michelangelo; but still, if he did not have a noble ideal before his mind, he would only attain to something very mean and ordinary.* Spurgeon

"Holiness is the sum of a million little things —avoidance of little evils, setting aside of little bits of worldliness and little acts of compromise, the putting to death of little inconsistencies and little indiscretions, the attention to little duties and little dealings, the hard work of little self-denials and little self-restraints, the cultivation of little benevolences and little forbearances." Kevin DeYoung

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Sanctification/holiness usually stalls for lack of effort on our part

- If we abuse grace we will become content to live a casual, indifferent, not okay, and possibly even sinful lives.

Grace covers failures but it includes the Holy Spirit's help to turn from sin & obey.

- Don't be satisfied with a little bit of holiness, biblical/theological knowledge, a slightly better marriage, a little personal spiritual growth, etc.
 - God desires so much more for you. Rom 6:14, 8:35-39
 - Don't be content with where you are at spiritually: Rejoice in the things you are saved from & pursue things Christ saved you to: freedom, obedience, holiness.
 - Remember Whose you are!