

LELC Easter 6

John 5:1-9

Texts today = embarrassment of riches

Start ^{to} the Gospel text - notice a few things
as we go.

v. 1-3

Beth-zatha (Bethesda) Pool, place of healing

Five porticos - Big place! Lots of people
waiting to be healed.

Tradition gleaned - angel stirs the water,
first one in gets healed.

Beth-esda House of mercy/grace

Bitter irony house of shame/disgrace
that people are made to feel for being
diseased, disabled. Mindgame: their own
fault, sin, ...

Bitter cruelty then → their job to get well,
wait, watch hustle on down to
the water.

"How convenient" for society - becomes a
hiding pen for people in need,
out of sight, out of mind...

No surprise then, Jesus comes to Jerusalem.
He goes to Beth-zatha. Enters the
place of pain, disgrace, despair.
Always true. Jesus always coming
to us in our ^{part} disgrace, despair. 1

V. 5-6
One Man... long time... "Do you want to get well?"

What a great question. Jesus asks first.
When you start to look for this notice
Jesus asks all the time (or responds to
direct request.)

Do we want to get well? You would think
a no-brainer. Physically - aches; pains;
conditions

life threatening
diseases..

Emotionally? Spiritually? Yes! (maybe)
Harder to answer. Old unhealthy patterns
are familiar, easier to keep doing.

Change is hard.

Example: my shoulder, PT: mindfulness
to keep shoulder blade back; down.
Unfamiliar, hard, sometimes uncomfortable.

Have to be paying attention, making subtle
changes all the time. It's exhausting.

Have to be letting go of "comfortable" actions
that are the ones causing the pain. So...

Do you want to get well.

Question could be asked collectively
LELC, do you want to get well?

Can not be simply ~~return~~ go back to some
imagined good old days. - how far back?
- what was so good?
2

Question is really -

Are you willing to embrace a new kind of wholeness? Might feel unfamiliar at first. Might involve real work, subtle changes.

V. 7 ~~5-6~~

Sir, I have no one...

Notice - he doesn't really answer the question. Responds with his story.

Couple of possibilities:

1) Making an excuse (used to doing that) ^{38 years}

Reminds me of Eckard Tolle's idea of pain body: what ego holds on to, makes a person feel special, important. Ego not letting go.

2) Guy is just reporting sorry state of the world, even at water's edge, it's a dog-eat-dog, everyone for themselves world so he never get to the healing waters.

3) Both are true - People make do with what life deals them. Feeling helpless to change either their own condition or the collective/systemic broken-ness

Jesus understands. Senses both man's helplessness and hopelessness. Responds:

V 8-9

Stand up, take your mat, walk...

Notice: no water stirring is involved. Healing comes, but not by same old, same old. 3

Which is not the same as to say Jesus didn't stir things up. Stirred up a whole lot. Truth \Rightarrow sometimes true healing only comes by letting God stir things up.

1) "On the sabbath" means keepers of status quo all bent out a shape. (Both to head & to carry the mat), How dare they...!

2) All the onlookers. Wait, what?! Just imagine them seeing maybe this "house of mercy" was anything but. Leave their holding pen. Back ~~to~~ into community, to be seen, cared about there.

One last notice: Healing did not come by the man doing something. Except being there, ^{encountering,} listening to Jesus.

So easy to think we can fix things, usually involves some version of

- doing more of same old stuff
- doing same old stuff better.

Man at the water's edge did neither.

Healing came, then did what Jesus told him to do.

Here at LELC - some anxiousness
Council Mtg: when starting a Call Committee.

\approx when can we get things back to normal
which normal? How far back? 4

God never leads us back, always forward
Man was healed - but Jesus didn't turn back time

Man was given opportunity to find the new
way to be whole in the world.

Spoiler alert: Council didn't appoint Call Comm. yet.

Task Force: 12-15 folk, ministry evaluation

This summer → not about doing
→ about listening for Jesus.

Paul - down to the river on the Sabbath
(healed on Sabbath)

What's up with that? Rest ↔ Healing go together
who knew?! ;)

Paul at River - telling folks about radical
inclusion, equality, respect in Jesus,
New life in barrier-busting community
in his name. on the one day

They weren't up to their ears doing.

Maybe when we are too busy doing some old
things we can't hear Jesus either.

- we can't hear him urging us to get up &
leave behind anything & everything
that is less than what God desires for us.
- we can't hear him telling us to take our
mat, to hold onto the symbols of
where we've been & what we've gone
through - to give witness to the healing 5

God has accomplished in us, in our lives

- we can't hear Jesus calling us to walk, to walk in the ways of a whole new kind of wholeness - love, respect, justice, peace, equality, inclusion. That is God's dream for all people for all creation.

Here at LELC - been moving pretty fast. Ever have a time running & need to listen?

Stop, catch your breath, turn your ears. Maybe what we need hear this summer.

Stop, catch our breath, be still. Let H. Sp.
alright, speak words we need to hear.

- remind us how much we are loved
- " " how forgiveness changes the possible future.
- remind us God's love for everyone, no exceptions

No doubt God is calling LELC to future blessed to be a blessing - living on the Edge, daring to embody Gospel that will unfold in time.

For now, take time to stop, rest, listen what wholeness, new way of being whole, means - each one of us

- all of us together.

Let God stir within us, see what yet will be. Amen. 6