



## FAITHFUL LIGHT CHURCH

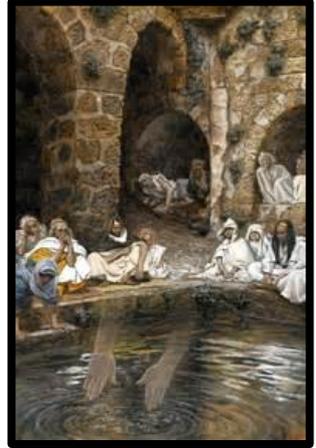
Pastors Dennis & Diane Gordon

Sabbath June 24, 2017

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL?

Rev. Raymond Woodward & Rev. Diane Gordon

*John 5:1-9* “After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>4</sup>For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. <sup>5</sup>And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? <sup>7</sup>The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. <sup>8</sup>Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. <sup>9</sup>And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.”



An artist's rendering of the pool at St. Anne's Church in Jerusalem shows the Bethesda pool where healings took place. The Hebrew name Bethesda means “house of mercy”, but also “the place of the two outpourings” because the pool is fed by water from two adjacent pools. Bethesda became somewhat of a healing shrine. But, before we criticize this primitive belief, remember that many people in our world today flock to very similar places, and some seem to receive help; but sadly, most do not.

## **JESUS SAID, LITTLE GIRL, RISE UP AND BE HEALED!**

When Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat to the other side, a large crowd had gathered to meet him; so he stayed beside the sea. One of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, came up, and, on seeing Jesus, fell at his feet and earnestly begged him, saying, "My little daughter is dying; come, I beg of you, and place your hands on her that she may be cured and live." So Jesus went with him, and a great crowd followed and pressed about him. In the crowd was a woman who had suffered from hemorrhage for twelve years and had been treated by many physicians, spending all that she had, yet was none the better, but rather had grown worse. Having heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his robe, for she said to herself, "If I can but touch his garments, I shall be cured." Immediately she knew that she was cured of her disease. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has cured you. Go and live in peace, and be healed of your disease."



While Jesus was still speaking, messengers came from the house of the ruler of the synagogue, saying, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Master further?" But Jesus, overhearing the message, said to the ruler, "Have no fear, only trust." Jesus would allow no one to go with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he found a crowd of people weeping aloud and wailing. Entering, Jesus said to them, "Why are you making an uproar and weeping? Jesus sent the mourners out and took the father and mother of the child and those who were with him into the room where she was. Then, taking her by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha koumi," which means, "Little girl, arise." To the astonishment of all, the little girl (who was twelve years of age) got up at once and walked about.

**Jesus loves you and wants you trust in Him to be your healer.**



Those lying around the pool symbolize humanity, absolutely helpless with crippling addictions, blinding ambitions, and paralyzing conditions. Sounds very similar to our world today doesn't it? Although we try so hard to be self-sufficient,

we are impotent, completely powerless to change our inner lives under our own power. That's why we devour self-help books, and that's why people then and now flock to places that promise a cure.

The problem with Bethesda was that it seemed to work for some, but not for most. The **FIRST** person into the water was cured. That's the way it seems to work in life – there's always someone first and someone last, and that's why we so jealously guard our number one status in the human family. Into this atmosphere of frustration walks Jesus. He heads directly to one of the most senior members of the Bethesda regulars, and His question cuts to the chase: “WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL?”

The answer seems to be so obvious, and yet consider this: The man had not asked Jesus for help, and a beggar of that day could lose a sometimes profitable and easy income if he were cured. He would have to lose his “victim mentality” and that is not always easy to do! Look at his answer that is either from his true helplessness to help himself, or for many an answer like this is blaming others!

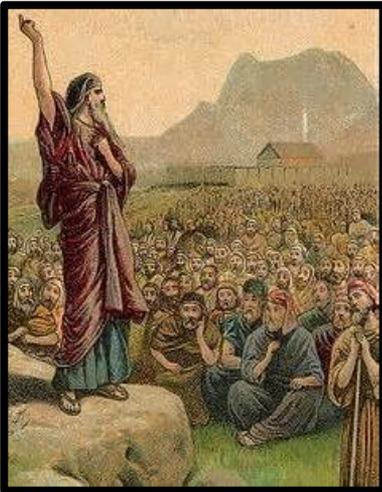
*Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.”*

For 38 years, I've been a victim of the carelessness, indifference and inefficiency of my family, my friends and even the church. They have all these special meetings where the waters are troubled, but it always seems like someone else gets the help! I'm just left sitting here while healing happens all around me.

JESUS KNOWS THAT THE MAN'S "FOCUS" IS PRECISELY THE PROBLEM. Jesus does not berate the man, but He bypasses the man's excuse and offers him a solution. Imagine this man staring intently toward the waters of Bethesda while the Son of God stands beside him offering healing, but he is thinking, "Get out of my way, Jesus you are blocking my way to the pool!" But Jesus asks him, DO YOU WANT TO BE WELL?"

Does the man hit the side of his head as to say, "Hey, I never thought of that?" There is no attempt by Jesus to judge the man's worthiness or even his faith level. Jesus just needs to know one thing, ARE YOU WILLING? Many of us offer the same defense when we are offered help protesting, "But my condition is not my fault!" But Jesus says that is not the issue – ARE YOU WILLING? But you don't know how long I've felt this way! But Jesus says that is not the issue – ARE YOU WILLING? But you don't know what I'm hiding! And Jesus says that is not the issue – ARE YOU WILLING?

Jesus wants to give us wholeness, to make us what we were always meant to be, but we are such defensive, guilt-ridden, complicated people that we cannot respond easily to His offer, so in our pride, we stay the same while we sit on the side of the healing pool.



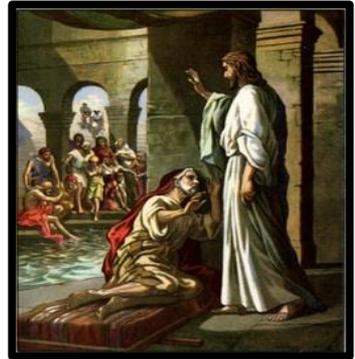
Jesus is still asking, "WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL?" It's like the choice Moses gave to the people he had led for 40 years when he was on the verge of death

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*Deuteronomy 30:19* "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

Moses knew like we do that many, if not most, of our circumstances in life are chosen. We make unhealthy, unrewarding choices and then blame others for our situation! So, we can either consider ourselves the victims of the insensitivity of others, or we can just square our shoulders and make better choices! CHOICE IS THE ISSUE. CHOOSE LIFE BY CHOOSING GOD!

The unspoken message in Jesus' question is that we sometimes must pay a price to be well. There are benefits to having an illness, an excuse. The man by the pool didn't have to work, and someone carried him around every day. He may have had other perks, but all of them paled in comparison to just becoming well!



Carl Rogers, one of the most innovative psychologists in the last half of the twentieth century, said that **he considers only one kind of counselee relatively hopeless: the person who blames other people for his or her problems.** He claims that if you can take ownership of the mess you're in, there is hope for you and help available.

Dr. Martin Seligman is the author of a book called "Learned Optimism." In it, this respected psychologist says that we all have in our hearts a YES or a NO. We respond to life either negatively or positively. Seligman's thesis is that we can learn to put a YES in our hearts and **by doing so can change the course of our lives.**

This is the heart of what Jesus is asking:

- Do you want to be well?**
- Do you want your marriage to work?**
- Do you want to get over that bitterness?**
- Do you want to walk away from the sin that binds you?**
- Do you want to be saved?**



[2 Corinthians 1:19-20](#) “The Son of God, Jesus Christ, that Silas and Timothy and I preached to you, was not yes and no. In Christ it has always been yes. [20] [The yes to all of God's promises is in Christ](#), and through Christ we say yes to the glory of God.”

JESUS IS GOD’S “YES” FOR YOUR LIFE! And, just like the man at the pool, when Jesus gives a command, there is power in the command to fulfill the command.

**It’s no longer about your power, but about His power!**

In the same way that He spoke the world into being in [Genesis 1:3](#) “And God said, *Let there be light, and there was light*”, Jesus’ spoken words had the power to cure.

[John 1:3](#) “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made”.

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL?  
STEP INTO THE WATER!**

*Ephesians 3:17* “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love. 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”

## **LIFE STORY: Tomatoes** by Rev. James Smith

Tomato seed – very small – talk about it

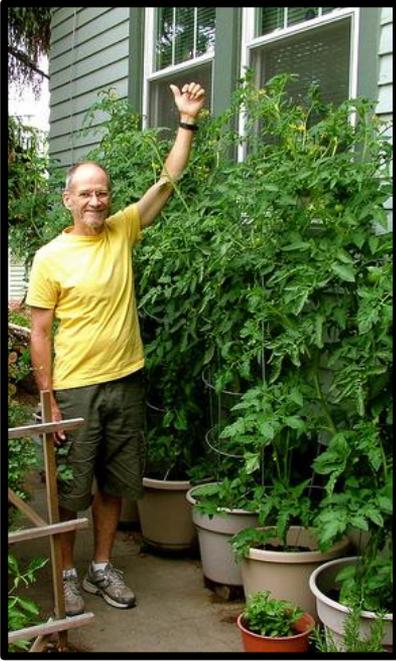
Tomatoes are one of my favorite items to plant in my garden. Many people consider the tomato to be a vegetable, but scientifically speaking it is a fruit.



The first time I planted a garden, I went and bought some tomatoes seeds and planted them in the ground. The plants got about 2 feet high and gave us only a few tomatoes. I had planted them in a good spot, with lots of water and fertilizer, so I didn’t understand why my tomato crop was so small. Then I did some research. I started studying tomatoes,

I studied not only the seed, and the soil needs of the plant, but more importantly I studied how a tomato grows and what I could do to encourage and even cause the plant to grow quicker and larger. Tomato plants are not really designed if you will to be grown in a cold climate such as where we live. They love warm climates and do incredibly well in places in the world where it is warm all year. This is because they have all year and not just a few months for their roots to grow deep into the soil. Our season here is too short for this to happen.

So there are a few things that you have to do if you want to have lots of big juicy tomatoes in your garden. It all starts with the seed.



My tomato plants last year were over 6 ft. tall. All from this little seed. My wife and I canned dozens of quarts of big fat juicy tomatoes that we have used all year that came from just one packet of seeds.

I have found that there are a few things to understand about tomato plants if you want big tomatoes. First you have to plant this seed early. Months before you plant the rest of your garden you have to plant these little seeds. If you want to have big juicy tomatoes you can't wait until the last minute to plant your seeds.

You know some people think it's ok to put God off until the last minute. You know... Live like you want to live regardless of what God thinks or how He feels, and then at the last minute, expect Him to just make it all ok.

[2 Corinthians 6:2](#) "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Some people put God off over and over again until it's too late, like the parable of the foolish virgins.

I have started my seed in egg containers in my office windows as early as March. There's a reason why I put my seedlings in the window. They will get heat from the sun, which warms the soil and causes the seed to germinate. The seedlings need the sun to shine on them when the leaves begin to grow.

I like watching the way the plants grow in the direction that the sun is shining from. They reach for the sun.

Someone said, “Well that’s a pretty small container to plant a plant that is going to get 6 ft. high”. And you are right, **but understand something**; I’ve got some transplanting to do before I put this little plant in my garden. And here is one of the biggest tricks to growing really big juicy tomatoes from seed. It happens when we transplant this little tiny plant to a larger pot.

When you transplant a tomato plant, you do something with it that is different than any other plant.

First: You pinch off all the branches except for the top leaves.

Second: You place the plant deep down into the soil all the way up to the top leaves.

You bury most of the plant...

The little hairs that line the stem are all capable of becoming roots.



A large, vigorous tomato plant requires a correspondingly robust root system. Such plants need less water and can stand up to the wind and rains of summer storms. Fine hairs lining tomato seedling stems are all capable of developing into roots. Therefore, the greater the stem portion buried at planting time, the bigger the root system, thus improving the plants growth and production.

So before I plant the tomato plant in the garden, I have transplanted it this way about 3 times burying all of the roots and most of the stem so that the root system which is where the plant gets it water and nutrients and its ability to withstand the summer storms come from.

Now how many of you know that I’m not really here to talk to you about tomatoes?

But what we are here for is to learn how to not only become the best Christians that we become, but to also bear fruit in our lives that He would be pleased with. You know when God starts working in a person's life; it may not look like much to many of us.

I am amazed actually at what God is able to do in a person's life when all He has to work with is this much right here in one tiny seed of a tomato. You and I would look at this right here and say, "nothing much will come of that." But what you and I may not understand is that within the walls of this tiny seed is a tiny embryonic plant complete with root, stem and leaves, ready to sprout when suitable conditions appear.



Seed Coat  
Stored food  
Seed Leaf  
Shoot  
Stem.

Everything needed is already in the seed. All that is necessary are the right environmental conditions to cause the stem and the leaf to begin to push upwards and the root to begin growing downward. So if we are talking about a tomato seed, all we need are warm soil, and enough moisture. It's just a tiny seed, but if you put it in the right environment, it has the potential to do some amazing things!

I'm amazed sometimes at what God is able to do in many people's lives. Here is why you can't go around judging anyone. Here is why you can't look at someone's life and say, "that's not much to work with."

**Matthew 5:22** *“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”*

Do you know why there is a greater punishment for calling someone a fool? It’s because in the original translation, a fool was someone who was totally worthless. They were without value.

Be careful that you don’t misunderstand the value of the seed. Be careful that you see the potential that exists in every single human being on this planet. It may not look like much to you, but inside there is everything He needs to grow an amazing miracle that will produce more fruit than you can harvest. Deep inside each and every one of us is everything that God needs for the miracle of germination to take place in our lives.



You may not see it  
You may not recognize it  
You may not understand it

But given the right environment, a miracle is about to happen in someone’s life. So it all starts with the seed, But then you have to bury the seed. All the way into the soil.

**Romans 6:4** *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

My wife made fun of me this year because I put a heating pad under my seedlings to cause the soil to get warm.

Our winter this year just wouldn't end and the sun was barely shining so I put a little heating pad under the plants to trick them into believing that spring was here and this caused them to germinate sooner than they would have if I left them in that cold office window.

Here is why I come to church

Here is why I worship Him

Here is why I believe it is important to get into an atmosphere where His presence is operating.

We need the warmth of His spirit to cause some things to germinate in our lives.

The Bible says that God Inhabits the Praises of His people.

I've seen some amazing miracles happen when people got into an atmosphere of praise. I've seen people filled with the Holy Ghost in a Spirit filled worship service. I've seen physical healings take place when the church went to praising Him.



I've seen lives completely changed all because God placed the warmth of His Spirit under their lives as they entered into a place of Worship. But understand something,

Just because you have been baptized doesn't mean that God is finished with you.

Just because you are feeling the warmth of His presence and love in your life does not mean that He is finished with you either.

He's got some transplanting He wants to do in your life. He wants to get your roots down deeper into the soil.

The problem with just dropping some seeds in the ground and walking away is that the roots are not going to grow deep enough in most soils.

This means that it's not going to get enough water.

***John 7:38** He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*



God's desire for every one of us is that from our lives would come a fountain of living water.

See, you can't have fruit in your life if you don't have water.

V 39 tells us that he wasn't talking about literal water, but He was speaking about the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost if you will.

So how do we get more water to this tomato plant?

We bury it deeper into the soil. The little hairs surrounding the stem will become roots to water and nourish the plant and it's coming fruit.

Have you ever walked into a church service where the presence of God is so real that you got goose bumps?

All those little hair follicles begin to stand up. What are they doing? I believe they sensing the presence of something deeper and are reaching out to Him.

I say it all the time; “God is not in the business of leaving you where He left you!”

He’s still working on you.  
He wants to plant you deeper.  
Deeper in your relationship with Him.  
Deeper in understanding of His Word.

Deeper into a place where your true potential can be reached in Him.

Deeper where you have to desire and depend upon His Spirit in your life.

See, God understands that the deeper your relationship with Him is, and the deeper your spiritual roots are, the more fruit will come from your life.



He didn’t just plant you and I in the Church so we could be some big old plant with no fruit,

But He places us here so that fruit could come from our lives.  
Fruit with some seeds in it.

Fruit that has the potential to reach some other people.

Fruit that is capable of reproducing itself in the Kingdom.  
Fruit that is not only sweet to eat if you will, but who also has some life sustaining nutrients in it.

Some of us have had some transplanting happen in our lives.  
You know what I'm talking about when it comes to being buried deeper.

There's a root system that you have today that you didn't have earlier in your life or walk with God.

You've been through some things.  
You've had a few setbacks.  
You've faced some transplanting's in your life and walk with God.

But you've grown by it.  
Your life is stronger whether you can see it or not.  
Your walk with God is deeper because of it.  
You have a different root system than you did before.



And as a result you are capable of greater things in Him!  
So let's just praise Him and let our roots grow deep!



JESUS GIVES ME LIVING WATER FROM THE WELL OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT IN ME THAT WILL NEVER GO DRY!