



A MATTER OF FAITH

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Jesus was in Jerusalem. There is a pool of water that some in Jesus' day believed had the ability to heal sickness. Hundreds of people looking to be healed would gather there. They would wait for the water to stir and then go in hoping to be healed.

Jesus found a man there who had been crippled for thirty eight years. He had been at the pool for a long time hoping to get into the water.

Jesus asked him "Do you want to get well?"

The crippled man answered him "Sir, when the water is stirred, I don't have anybody to put me in the pool. By the time I get there, somebody else is already in."

Jesus told him, "Get up, take your bedroll and start walking." The man was immediately made well. He picked up the mat he had been laying on and walked off.

It seems odd that Jesus asked him if he wanted to get well. Wasn't it obvious? The man had been at the pool for a very long time trying to get in the water so as to be healed.

Jesus knew the man's heart. He knew the answer before he asked the question.

The reason I believe Jesus asked him was that Jesus wanted the man to state that he wanted to get healed. He also wanted the man to realize that his current course of seeking out healing had failed him and it was a futile effort. He was not going to get healed by getting into the water. It was not going to happen. He needed Jesus to heal him. He was helpless on his own. He was stuck without hope until he met Jesus.

Jesus was the only way to the wholeness that he was seeking.

I have a friend who has a health problem. It is pain in his joints. He has been to a doctor who has given him a solution that requires surgery. He has sought out second and third opinions. The answer has been consistently the same; he needs to have surgery in order to be able to get well. He has made many efforts to rehab the joints on his own only to find that the problem re-

mains. He does not want the surgery. He keeps pursuing other remedies in the hope that anything else will work. Eventually, when the pain gets bad enough, I think he will go have the surgery and get well. The pain has to get worse or his stubbornness has to wear down in order for his will to break.

Change most times requires pain. Change most times requires us to fail. We have to reach a point of realizing that our current course keeps leading us in circles and that we are no closer to the wholeness that we desire.

We have to answer the question "what do we want?"

If I see someone who claims to want to lose weight eating a Snicker's bar, I can pretty much guess that they really do not want to trim off the unnecessary pounds all that much. Their desire for the sweet taste of candy is much greater than their desire to be healthy. In order to lose weight, one

has to change their diet. There are no magic pills. It is going to take discipline. The person is going to have to want to be healthy more than they want to have the pleasure of eating things that taste good but are harm-

ful to their bodies.

Do you want to be whole? Do you want it badly enough to change your current course even though the path to healing may require a great deal of sacrifice and discipline?

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